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## THE ANATOMY OF EXISTENCE

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(1)✓

THE healthiest current in modern philosophy has been that which sought to bring all our notions into relation with experience and to test their validity by finding out how they arose. The corresponding defect has been to rest content with what are alleged to be the brute facts of experience, impressions and ideas according to Hume, sense-data according to his more recent followers, and to refuse to admit any power in thought to interpret and to transcend these more superficially obvious data. The whole duty of philosophy, after all, is not exhausted by the criticism of common sense and the distinction, within the sphere of what we already hold, of what we genuinely know from what we merely opine. Plato, indeed, in the *Theaetetus*, in the classical discrimination of knowledge from opinion, maintained that real knowledge was altogether outside the sphere of common sense. While not subscribing to this extreme view, we may at least admit that philosophy and a criticism of experience do not wholly coincide, and that there should be room for a metaphysic as well as for an epistemology.

The metaphysical systems which have made most stir in modern times have been idealistic, and, consequently, although they could not but profess to be general interpretations of the world of experience, they have not had much to say to the more empirically-minded thinkers. If, however, a realistic metaphysic is to establish its claim, it must do justice to the epistemological preoccupations of modern times by relating itself as closely as possible to experience. The great exemplars of realistic metaphysical thinking are, of course, to be found in Aristotle and in the mediaeval Aristotelians, especially St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and it might be held that the vigorous revival of Thomism had already provided a practical solution of the problem of establishing a realistic metaphysic. Unfortunately it remains true that Thomistic metaphysics are still very much of a close preserve; they are little known and little regarded by those who are not of the school. This is not entirely due, as Thomists sometimes give the impression of believing, to the perversity of the modern mind; it is partly the result of a genuine difficulty on the part of contemporary thinkers in seeing the notions

which it employs as matter of fact rather than as ingenious logical constructions.

Here Thomists frequently fail to offer the help which is needed. Many of them have so completely imbibed the atmosphere of a period when epistemological preoccupations were not to the fore that they are content to hold themselves aloof from the more recent climate of opinion. In presenting the old metaphysics, they are perfectly happy to present them in the old way, pursuing a deductive course in pure abstraction. The modern man, nurtured on the post-Cartesian tradition, wants at every moment to interrupt and to say: Whence do you obtain these notions which you are using? How do you show their relevance to experience? This is not an illegitimate demand, and, so long as it is not fulfilled, the suspicion will remain that Kant may have been right in judging that metaphysical notions were not derived from experience but imposed upon it.

The logical positivists rejoice in proclaiming that metaphysical statements are meaningless. It would be easy to criticize their exclusive interest in words at the expense of thought, their defective criterion of meaning, and their vague pejorative use of the term *metaphysical*, which makes it a philosophical analogue to *fascist* as used by politicians. For our present purposes, perhaps, it will be more helpful to consider what there is in this opposition to metaphysics which makes it an opportune challenge to metaphysicians to show that their statements are just as matter of fact as any protocol-statements about sensations. Many indeed, after studying metaphysics with the best will in the world, have echoed Alice's remark on reading "Jabberwocky": "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are!" To know exactly what metaphysical ideas are entails being aware of their application to experience, and in the present climate of philosophical opinion this application has to be made as explicit as possible.

The highly abstract character of metaphysical notions entails both that they are more universally verified than others and that they are correspondingly more difficult to isolate with precision. We have to try to catch our abstract thinking in the process of forming them. Since genuine thinking is conformed to fact, it seems probable that the general structure of thought reflects the most universal aspects of fact. There is, that is to say, an antecedent probability that logic will afford a clue to metaphysics. Just as a fruitful and not merely verbal logic cannot avoid metaphysical issues, so a critical metaphysic must keep in close touch with logic. A greater unity of logic and metaphysics seems to be desirable for the benefit of both.

The fundamental notion of a realistic metaphysic must be that of being. Here, you may say, we face no difficulty about its application, since it is verified in everything that is. But we still want to know how we hit upon being, or rather how being strikes upon us. The disputes among metaphysicians about this fundamental notion suggest strongly that many conceive it differently and that many conceive it vaguely. Perhaps we may find a clue in the nature of the existential proposition, the proposition of thought in which existence is asserted of something. What follows is a meditation on the existential proposition.

(II)

It is not difficult to appreciate the fundamental place which the existential proposition holds in our thinking. First of all, propositions which record experience are more fundamental than those whose *primâ facie* reference is to abstractions. The latter, which is the class of true general propositions, may be logically primitive, in the sense that their evidence is in themselves, but they are not psychologically primitive. We should not be able to entertain general propositions unless we had come across actual examples of the terms which they relate, or had at least found in experience examples of the factors which may be combined in some new way to make such terms. The logical *a priori* is not a psychological *a priori*; we cannot produce new notions out of ourselves but must wait upon experience.

Moreover, even general propositions contain a hypothetical reference to existence. Although, when we say that all men are mortal, we are not primarily speaking about individual men but are stating that human nature is inherently liable to death, and this would be true whether men had ever existed or not, nevertheless the full expression of our thought is that, if a man exists, he is liable to death. This was a universal proposition, but particular general propositions have a corresponding hypothetical reference to existence. They are *primâ facie* expressions, not of entailment, as are universal propositions, but of compatibility between abstractions. Yet, when we say, for example, that some desires are unattainable, we mean that, if a desire occurs, it does not follow that it is attainable. If there were no realm of existence, the knowledge which we have of the relationship of general terms would be ultimately meaningless.

Hence singular propositions are psychologically primary. A singular proposition asserts something about an actual person or thing, or about a group of actual persons or things. The gram-

✓ matical form, of course, is not an unambiguous clue to the type of proposition which it expresses. Propositions which are verbally expressed in statements beginning with *all* or *some* may be essentially singular propositions. When we say of a family that all the Smiths have blue eyes, this is a proposition of exactly the same logical type as when we say that John Smith has blue eyes. The majority of statements beginning with *some* are in reality of the singular type; they express the result of observations about certain members of a class. In other words, we are here using the term *singular*, with a certain degree of violence, to include *plural*; the essential logical distinction is between *singular* and *general*, and general propositions may be either universal or particular.

We return now to the singular type of proposition, which we have seen to be psychologically primary. The grammatical analysis of a statement is into subject and predicate, and presumably this verbal form expresses something of the movement of thought, although we should be equally wary on this point also of expecting verbal and logical form to correspond unambiguously. The logical form of a general proposition is certainly more complex than it appears to be, since it is resolvable into a hypothetical connection, but the kind of singular proposition which we are accustomed to utter seems straightforward enough. When we say that John is intelligent or that John is walking, we are assigning an attribute or act to an already known and determined subject.

We notice, however, that we cannot say that John is intelligent or that John is walking without presupposing that John exists. It is true that the John of whom we are speaking might be a character in fiction. Do we have to say that we cannot affirm that Mr. Pickwick went to Bath without affirming that Mr. Pickwick existed? It seems on consideration that, in a Pickwickian sense, this should be admitted. Mr. Pickwick can be said to have gone to Bath only in the same kind of way in which he can be said to have existed; his fictitious journey presupposes his fictitious existence. Having perceived so much, we can for our present purpose leave aside the relatively departmental question of the status of fictions.

That John is walking, then, presupposes that John exists. We do not bother, in ordinary speech, to enunciate our full thought and to say that John both exists and is walking; we take it for granted that he exists, and that his existence is sufficiently well known by the hearer to be passed over without explicit mention. Nevertheless, when we say that John is walking, our full thought does in fact contain the two affirmations that John exists and that John is walking, and of these the affirmation of existence is primary. So much for the pure logic which is to serve as our foundation; we can now proceed to make the transition from logic to metaphysics.



## (III)

The existential proposition offers no greater difficulty to grammatical analysis than any other kind of statement. The predicate of existence is attributed to the subject which is John. But the genuine logical form of this piece of thinking is by no means so clear. With the verbal sequence of subject and predicate commonly corresponds the movement of thought from what is known and assumed to a fact which is newly affirmed about it. The subject can be, and has been, considered apart from the predicate. This is not to say that it could exist without the predicate, for a proposition may be necessarily true, but it is a possible object of thought without the predicate. Hence the subject of a proposition and of its contradictory is the same, and the contradictory of a significant proposition is itself significant, even though it may be false, and even though it may be necessarily false.

But Kant, in his rejection of the ontological argument, where for once he is in agreement with St. Thomas, made the point clearly that there is no identical subject of existence and non-existence. If, instead of saying that John exists, you say that John does not exist, you are not simply denying the predicate of existence to a subject which is John, but you are negating John as a whole and leaving nothing of which either existence or non-existence might be predicated. To maintain otherwise would be to suppose that essences are already in some sense real apart from existence, or, in more conversational language, to perpetrate the error of supposing that the world consists of a number of possible things, some of which exist while others do not. A merely possible thing, however, has no reality in itself; it has a kind of reality only in a mind which conceives it or in an agent which is able to bring it into being. Therefore, when we say that John exists, we are not adding the notion of existence to the notion of John in the same way in which we add the notion of intelligence when we say that he is intelligent.

We might, of course, paraphrase the statements that John exists or does not exist by saying that the notion of John has or has not a reality corresponding with it. But these are evidently sophisticated and reflexive statements which we could not come to make unless we were already acquainted with the reality or unreality of John, unless, that is to say, we had already affirmed a simpler proposition that John exists or does not exist. We cannot evade the difficulty of the existential proposition in this way.

If, then, existence declines to be a logical as opposed to a merely grammatical predicate, it is fair to conjecture that it may be rather more in the nature of a subject. Perhaps we should

invert the grammatical form of the existential proposition in order to arrive at its genuine logical form. Then the statement that John exists will mean that some existent thing possesses those characters which make up our notion of John. This suggestion commends itself by carrying its own evidence to reflective consideration. We have a notion, or set of notions, which is what we know about John, but a knowledge of the real existent John involves projecting these characters beyond the mind which, statically regarded, is the locus of concepts. Existence, then, is not a concept which can be put on the same level with other concepts or can be added to other concepts in order to form a more complex conceptual construction, but all concepts, if they are more than mere concepts and have a reference beyond the mind which entertains them, have this reference as belonging to existence or, rather, to some existent thing.

So far we have spoken of existence as the logical subject of the existential proposition, but it is an ultimate and unique kind of subject, and its uniqueness forbids us to assimilate it completely to what we usually mean by the subject of a proposition. That John is walking, we said, involves also that John exists. This turns out to mean that something is John and is walking. Hence John, in the proposition that John is walking, is really an earlier predicate doing duty as a subject, and the subjects of all singular propositions which are not simply affirmations of existence are of this nature. Consequently we have to enlarge our notion of logical subject in order to apply it to existence. Existence is not less a subject than what we usually take to be the subject of a proposition; it is more a subject, and it is a subject in a different and more fundamental way.

✓ In fact, in considering the existential proposition, we have got back to the logical translation of immediate experience. The first existential judgements are the primitive acts of awareness by thought of real things, whether ourselves or the things about us. This throws light on the nature of thought. In thinking we receptively assimilate, in a strictly ineffable way which can be appreciated only by introspection, characters which belong to reality, but we do not assimilate their reality or existence in the same way. Their existence is presented in the equally ineffable reaction of thought towards them. The two movements, action and reaction, are, of course, inseparable. We do not first become aware of a concept and then refer it to fact, but analysis of the awareness by thought of a real thing involves this distinction of conceptual assimilation and existential reference. In scholastic language the assimilated *species* is not *id quod cognoscitur*, but *id quo obiectum cognoscitur*, and the reaction of the mind is a direct awareness of the

real object whose species has been assimilated. Existence, then, is an altogether unique notion which cannot be put on a level with any other.

All this has an application to the correspondence of thinking with fact in which truth consists. For the correspondence in which the truth of an existential proposition consists is a correspondence of conceptual content with the fact to which it is referred, by the affirmation of existence within the proposition itself. The existential factor in the proposition, if it is validly judged to be true, is both the reference to fact and the contact of mind with the fact to which it refers. And, if all singular propositions can be reduced to sets of existential propositions, the distinction between the copulative and the absolute use of the verb *to be* is not an instance of pure ambiguity. The copulative *is* brings to memory the absolute *is* from which it derives its significance.

By way of illustration, let us see what we mean when we say that *this exists*. It might seem that grammatical subject and grammatical predicate were here logically identical, and that the meaning was that this is this. In reality, however, the two uses of *this* are not the same. We mean that this individual existent has this conceivable character. So, too, when we say that *something exists*, it would be a mistake to expand the meaning of the proposition simply in the form that something is something; we mean that some individual existent has some conceivable character. There is in every significant statement a dichotomy of conceptual content and factual reference. This can be applied even to general propositions if we remember that factual reference can be hypothetical.

#### (IV)

With this notion of existence we have penetrated through logic to metaphysics, for, when we turn to the ontological side of the question whose logical aspect we have so far been chiefly engaged in explaining, we find that we have arrived at the distinction of essence and existence. By essence, of course, is here meant everything about a thing except its existence. Essence becomes present to us by conceptual assimilation, and existence by factual reference.

In considering the relationship of essence and existence, we can proceed either from essence to existence or from existence to essence. When we proceed from essence to existence, we are following the logical movement of thought from conceptual assimilation to factual reference. Then existence, whose addition unites thought with fact, is considered as the final actuality of fact. This logical

approach, which is often found in St. Thomas Aquinas, finds its meaning in the natural movement of thought, but it does not exclude a more metaphysical approach, which is also to be found in St. Thomas, and in which the movement is from existence to essence. If the logical approach is exclusively pressed, the distinction of essence and existence is open to the objection, frequently brought against it, that it is simply a distinction of concept and fact, of the possible and the actual, and not a distinction within reality itself. This is much the same objection as is brought against the ontological argument, that it implies that the world consists of a number of possible things, some of which exist while others do not.

It is the metaphysical movement from existence to essence which reveals the full import of the distinction. Then we see that real essences are ways of existing, forms into which existence is shaped, and that the distinction between existence and essence belongs entirely to the realm of fact and is a real although metaphysical distinction. But, while we recognize that existence is ultimate metaphysical subject, we must beware of overlooking its unique character. For Bradley, it will be remembered, maintained that Reality was the ultimate subject of all judgements, and this Reality was one and the Absolute. While, however, Bradley was constantly and even disconcertingly discussing the reality or unreality of factors in experience, he does not seem to have asked himself with sufficient persistence what precisely is meant by reality. For all reality could be reducible to Reality with a capital letter only if the notion of reality possessed a unity of content comparable with that of other concepts.

In contrast with this view of Bradley the Aristotelian doctrine gains in relief and significance. For Aristotle emphasized that the ultimate subject of judgement is the concrete individual existent or primary substance, which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject. If we ask why primary substance can only be a subject, the answer is plainly because it is individual; a predicate is a conceptual content which might be attributed to other subjects as well, or is at least analysable into factors which might belong equally to other subjects. But the ultimate *this* is not an attribute of anything; it is the subject of attributes. If we ask next why *this* is this, the answer can only be because it is an existent; existence is indissociable, even in thought, from individuality.

Duns Scotus's theory of thisness (*haecceitas*) stresses the first part of this line of thought. Scotus saw clearly that real things were not simply combinations of universals; they could not be exhaustively analysed in purely conceptual terms. When you

have said all that you can possibly say *about* a thing, there is still left over a factor which is the individuality of the thing itself. Hence Scotus rightly declared that individuality or thisness was a distinctive notion and a distinctive element in the structure of fact. But he unfortunately failed to appreciate the fundamental identity of thisness and existence; for such an appreciation we must turn to the Thomistic doctrine of the analogy of being.

Aristotle had already said that being is not a genus; it is not a supreme category, of which the Aristotelian categories could be considered as the widest species. The reason is that being belongs as immediately to specific differences as to generic elements. We are not pursuing a straight line of analysis when we say that man is first a being, then an animal, and then rational; reality attaches to his rationality with the same immediacy as to his animality. While animality and rationality present two clearly distinct objects to thought, reality cannot be dissociated from either without altering it intrinsically from a factual into a merely conceptual element. Hence being is not a true generic concept but permeates the categories, applying in different ways to all the factors revealed by conceptual analysis in so far as these are envisaged not as mere concepts but as elements in fact. For a Thomist, then, being is not the tenuous negation of a negation, the not-nothingness which it is for Scotus, nor is it simply the widest and emptiest of universals; it is a positive factor parallel with essence, permeating the ramifications of essence and analogous or proportional to the essences which it realizes. It is by existence that an essence is the essence of this individual thing. ✓

That is why Bradley's view is erroneous. The ultimate subject of judgement is not, as Bradley supposed, a unitary existence but is in every case this or that individual existent. Indeed the whole situation presented by the existential proposition can be reformulated in terms of universality and individuality. Conceptual assimilation is of universals, characters which might belong to any number of things; existential reference assigns these to individual subjects. We are back once again in logic, but we are now in a position at once to appreciate its ontological counterpart.

This ontological counterpart is perceived through the logic, although it is not quite so simple as the logic. For the real essence, even as essence, is individual, and individuality, when it is considered as existence, reveals a universal aspect. In both cases universality and individuality are indissociable, but their relationship is in each case different. For essence, as essence, is primarily universal; it is because it has existence that it is this individual essence. That is why, when abstracted by thought from existence, it becomes a complete and unambiguous unity for the mind. Exist-

ence, on the other hand, is, as existence, primarily thisness, individuality. *Haecceitas*, says Scotus, *est de se haec*, and we may amend this statement by saying: *Existentia est de se haec*. This differs from *that* this in the very thisness which is its existence. Existence is essentially a variable and cannot be isolated, even in thought, from its variety of instantiation. If we ask why a thisness has with other thisnesses that community of character which we describe as existence, the answer is because every thisness is the thisness of an essence.

The metaphysical import of existence can be illustrated by a comparison with space and time. Space and time are fields of realization. The characters of corporeal things are manifested in a certain volume, and the characters of all finite things are manifested in a certain duration. But, while space and time are positively fields of realization, they are not less significantly fields of the spreading out or dissipation of the characters which they realize. Existence is a principle of realization, although it is in itself, unlike space and time, the pure principle of realization without being a principle of dissipation. Nevertheless, like space and time, it has, in isolation from the characters which it realizes, a certain indefiniteness. Existence is susceptible of degrees in accordance with the status of the essence which it realizes. Existence, that is to say, is analogous to essence.

We see, therefore, that the central positions of metaphysics are mutually interdependent. When we reflect on the existential proposition, we perceive as three facets of one fact the distinction of essence and existence, the solidarity of existence and individuality, and the proportion or analogy of existence to essence. All these three phrases render different aspects of one fundamental apprehension of the nature of being as we find it in experience.

### (V)

Yet another central feature of the structure of reality is forcibly presented to us in the affirmation of existence. For the transitory events which are the most superficially obvious objects of awareness are apprehended by us not simply as existing but as belonging to an existent. We are not aware merely of a red sensation but of ourselves having a red sensation; we are not aware merely of a certain volume but of a thing having this volume. This, of course, runs counter to the whole tradition of Hume, but, if so, so much the worse for Hume, for it is a primary deliverance of reflection containing its evidence in itself.

Moreover, it commends itself by solving a difficulty which



confronts any philosophy approximating to the Humian\* type in trying to do justice to experience. For Hume rightly declared that he could find in the impressions and ideas which alone he consented to recognize nothing corresponding with the notion of agency. Humian impressions and ideas are complete in themselves and inert. It is possible partly to rebut Hume by vindicating in terms of entailment the notion of causality as a relationship between events in time in accordance with universal laws. But this is only half the battle, for the notion of agency, the genuinely dynamic factor, is not revealed until we scrutinize the notion of being.

The events of experience, we said, are apprehended not merely as existing but as belonging to an existent. For the existent does not simply receive this characteristic or that; it can with all emphasis be said to take this form or that. When we consider adequately what we apprehend as existence, we find that this is not static and merely receptive but dynamic and properly active. The notion of agency springs from the notion of existence. The existent is an agent, and first of all an immanent agent in relation to its own qualities and activities. It is here that we capture the meaning of substance. Substance, in its proper metaphysical sense, is not the material out of which a thing is made; still less is it the inert featureless substratum of attributes and acts which Locke supposed it to be and by which he was so puzzled. Substance is the primary existent as primary agent.

When we have acquired this metaphysical perception of the primary existent as the active principle of its relatively transitory attributes and acts, we naturally go on to ask how it is essentially characterized in itself. It is here that we grasp the fundamental meaning of power or force. This is not a mere passive or receptive capacity, nor is it the partial presence of those causal factors which would bring about a change in time. The ultimate sense of power or force resides in being such as, in certain circumstances, to manifest such attributes and activities and, in other circumstances, to manifest others. It is because the substantial being of things is characterized by powers that they are capable of change without ceasing to be the same things essentially. Causation, in the ordinary sense of a succession of events in accordance with general laws, can only be a relatively superficial consequence of the interrelatedness of agencies.

Hence a scrutiny of the notion of existence gives us a fuller conception of the metaphysical structure of fact. A thing is primarily a substance, and a substance is an existent with powers. From the manner in which substances are related follow the actual attributes and operations which they possess at this moment or that. These attributes and operations have existence derivatively,

because they belong to a substantial existent. While, on the side of essence, therefore, actual attributes and operations are logically prior to powers, since powers are conceivable only in relation to them, nevertheless powers are ontologically prior, since they belong to what is first in the order of existence. The world of essence, so exclusively contemplated by many philosophers, is comparatively a dead shadow-world; it is the contemplation of existence which endows it with activity and life.

We have, therefore, arrived at the fundamental positions of an Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysic. We have distinguished the orders of essence and of existence, and have found in existence the principle of individuality and of activity. These positions are not new, but we have tried to give new life to them by relating them more explicitly to experience. We have tried to show more clearly that genuine metaphysical notions are not ingenious logical constructions but are demanded by the nature of our thought in so far as it is a reflection of fact. Whenever we say that anything exists, we are uttering a metaphysical statement, and, if we ask ourselves with sufficient persistence what we mean by existence, a metaphysical system unfolds itself before us.

But metaphysics are not exhausted by metaphysical analysis; the science of being as such leads the mind naturally to the ultimate source of being. Beings in which there is a dichotomy of existence and essence, of substance and attribute, can only be derivative. If being is the one factor which ontologically presupposes no other, the final question about the nature of reality is to ask what being of itself must be. The answer is not provided by a being which is merely such as in certain circumstances to become what it may be, nor is it provided by a being which has this specific and limited essence or that. Necessary being transcends the distinctions of substance and attribute, of existence and essence. Being itself is of itself and at once the fullness of being. This, as St. Thomas shows us, is the metaphysically final way of conceiving the nature of God. If we examine our common notion of existence, it is not only in order to perceive the metaphysical structure of the things of experience but to enable us more readily to rise to that supreme metaphysical insight by which we transcend the world of human experience.

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## ASPECTS OF E. M. FORSTER

By PETER AULT

(I)

THE novelist as such need not possess a new philosophy, or one that has been clearly formulated. He may even be unconscious of the principles that guide him in the choice of incident and delineation of his characters, that regulate the fluctuating ardour of his sympathy. "I have nothing," said Yeats, "but reason to guide me; and am constantly in doubt about small matters": and perhaps the apprehension of opinions is never an equipment for the novelist, whose business, as an artist, is to mimic, not discuss what he perceives. The meaning, interest and importance of all matters, small and great, may be in doubt whenever unassisted reason is our guide: and, if the verisimilitude, variety and energy of Cervantes or Boccaccio appear as inexhaustible as life, it is not so with any author who makes fiction serve a thesis, as, for example, Doctor Johnson or Voltaire; in whom the character of moralist displaces not infrequently the character of mimic. The permanently valuable novels, then, have not in general been *romans à thèse*. Nevertheless, the composition of an artificial narrative, the critical selection of event and character, permits the inference, and furnishes in some degree the evidence of a philosophical system operating in the writer's mind, or of fragments out of one or several systems not available in conscious formulation, but pervasive as a custom of the will, as an elaborate and deeply-rooted prejudice. For not alone does every choice betray a tendency in choosing: it implies a principle of a choice. Life presents incident and character in boundless variety: the novelist chooses a few men, a few events; such as appear to him especially significant for evil or for good. And by this process of selection, by his varying display of sympathetic understanding, cold displeasure, fond solicitude, indifference, contempt, admiration, he communicates a complicated prejudice, an attitude to life, death, the destiny of man, the *Summum Bonum*. Subtle, pervasive and obscure is the influence of fiction; serious in its effects on morals and belief. Music alone among the arts is more intransigent of critical analysis: and music alone among the arts needs it more.

The novelist achieves his effects through an involuntary suspension in our minds of any tendency to question the credentials of a world which, by subtle innuendo, he has endowed with mimic, plausible vitality; a world which, as it were, becomes the mirrored

and articulated image of conceivable experience. So long as we are reading, we accept what we read with as little doubt as we feel about the news in the morning paper. Were we to justify our attitude, we would, perhaps, say: "All this is realistic, lifelike. It affects us in ways that life, too, affects us." Some of the ways, but not, perhaps, all the ways. Fantasy, allegory, farce may introduce us into worlds that seem real and alive: but in their several ways specialized and smaller than the world of everyday. Novels may be limited to serve a special purpose: to ridicule extravagance or vice; to paint the manners of an age; to draw attention to a scandal. Some are written to divert; some to terrify; others to convince or seduce. Yet those to which we most return for wisdom are constructed with no *a priori* limits to the life they claim to show. We look for something as rich and complicated as experience itself in any novel that would shew us how to live. Now human life is marked by the intersection of eternity and time, transcendent value and contingent circumstance. We live in two worlds at once, and must fulfil our obligations and achieve our due prosperity by the same actions in both, and simultaneously in both. If then his readers find wisdom of a kind in Mr. Forster's novels, that is because his subject-matter has no other boundaries but those of actual human life; or because such, it would appear, was his intention. This intention was defined by his friend Lowes Dickinson in words that Mr. Forster has preserved: "to bring realistic life into contact with the background of value (or whatever it is)".\* To grasp at once the detail and significance of life; perceive actuality and value as an integrated image; to see life steadily but also to see it whole. Mr. Forster's novels represent a sustained attempt to realize this ideal in terms of the life which he has known, the life of the leisured English upper-middle class at home and abroad.

A masterpiece, said Stendhal, in a metaphor of partial though imperfect application, is a mirror dawdling down a lane. Now any work of fiction, in its ultimate morphology, is a congeries of words chosen from normal human speech. Words are conventional signs, attached, by references more or less direct, to aspects and details of the world which men inhabit. By the very nature of his medium, therefore, the novelist (in this respect less free than the musician) is tied or tethered to facts, to the observed, defined, denominated facts. And his novel, a congeries of words, may be considered as a congeries of signs, that is of images, defining, that is reflecting, aspects of actual things. In this respect, the novel is a mirror. Here, however, the metaphor expires. For the mirror is an automatic, accurate reflector: but the novel is a function of the novelist; and novelists are men; and men are commonly inaccurate and never

\* Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1934), p. 216.

automatic. Some are more and some are less introverted: but mirrors are the only perfect extroverts. Life in a novel is inevitably life seen *à travers un temperament* and from a special point of view. And the utmost objectivity to which we are entitled from a novelist is that he shall be honest with himself, shall set down exactly, so far as he is able to, life as it has seemed in his experience to be. Where such an attempt has been made, and where the novelist has skill to match his purpose, criticism has a threefold task. First to examine the psychological traits, the elements of prejudice and metaphysical beliefs that form the author's temperament and his particular point of view. Second to define the scope and limits of the experience displayed. Finally the question should be asked: "Can we relate abnormalities in the novelist's version of experience to the assumption and intuitions by which he would seem, as a novelist, to live?"

In religion, Mr. Forster is an agnostic, and (a point of some significance) an agnostic of the second generation. It was said of an illustrious Victorian: *il était aussi tranquille dans sa manque de foi que le mystique dans sa croyance*. Eighty years ago this kind of tranquil unbelief was common. It is rarely met today. For the Victorian agnostic was a *christian* agnostic: he assumed some form of protestant theology, and found himself unable to accept it. And this simple act of unbelief was for many all the faith by which they lived. The father of John Stuart Mill was such a man: and, in *A Room With a View*, Mr. Forster has displayed for us another in the character of old Mr. Emerson, a man whose abundant zest appears to have no other source except affection for his son and an intense dislike of parsons. To those of us who lack their secret energy, such people must remain, perhaps, for ever unexplained. They, at least, are commonly quite unable to understand the inner, deadly collapse of the will to live, that failure of nerve that afflicts so many of the children they have nourished in their simple, sceptic creed. There is a special sort of accidie endemic in the second generation of agnostics. The classical account of it is in Mill's *Autobiography*:

I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to. . . . It occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.\*

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\* J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, ch. V, *passim*.

From this sudden atrophy of feeling, Mill was rescued by the influence of Wordsworth's poetry.

I needed to feel that there was permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this.

The benefit was not, however, metaphysical but psychological. It was with Mill as with Matthew Arnold: Wordsworth taught him how to feel. The philosophical difficulty remained, as it remains still to confound the vain imaginings of all who would discover in philanthropy or civilization the satisfactory ends of human life. Young Mr. Emerson fell suddenly a victim to the same kind of accidie:

George last Sunday—no, not ill: just gone under. It was always touch and go. He will live; but he will never think anything worth while.\*

As a matter of fact, George was saved in the end by falling in love, and we leave him in Italy on his honeymoon, apparently restored. But to Mrs. Moore, afflicted by a "dull state of nerves" exactly such as Mill describes, "coming at a time when she chanced to be fatigued", the sudden echo in the Caves at Malabar brought on the same inner collapse:

Her Christian tenderness had gone, or had developed into a just irritation against the human race. . . . She had come to that state where the horrors of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time—the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved.

(*A Passage to India*, chapters XXII, XXIII.)

And for Mrs. Moore there was no escape from this. "Everything exists, nothing has value": her sullen intuition forms the haunting, echoing theme of Forster's last and greatest novel. For the author, like the civilization he mirrors in his fiction, hovers constantly, his soul constantly hovers on the brink of irretrievable collapse.

Visions are supposed to entail profundity but—wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss also may be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots. . . .†

The parallel with Mill is not fortuitous. In ethics Mr. Forster is what roughly may be called a Cambridge Utilitarian. He deprecates

\* *A Room With a View*, ch. XIX.

† *A Passage to India*, ch. XXIII. This extraordinary apostrophe, unique in Forster's fiction (as a technical device it is specifically condemned by him in *Aspect of the Novel*), would appear to be a personal confession, threat or warning to the reader as a person from the author as a man.



fanaticism, writes from the point of view of one concerned for *civilization*, a belief in the importance of aesthetic satisfaction and of personal affection. It is the position, as critics have remarked, of Mr. G. E. Moore, who teaches that these things "include *all* the greatest, and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine".\* Now this, although a more refined, humane utilitarianism, still remains in fundamentals Mill's system. And as a way of life it is open to the same practical objection: it proposes as our highest good pleasure, but neglects or fails to imagine any object that is absolutely pleasurable. Should the natural appetite fail us for the things it calls good, it can propose no further motive for continuing to live. Mill, when Wordsworth's poetry had acted like a drug upon his enervated will, found no solution but evasion for the problem:

I never, indeed, wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end is only to be attained by not making it the direct end.

Happiness is the goal, but it can only be attained if we behave *as if* the goal were something else. And by similar prevarications, Mr. Forster's world is sustained:

I am worried by the thoughts of a war oftener than by the thoughts of my own death, yet the line to be adopted over both these nuisances is the same. One must behave as if one is immortal, and as if civilization is eternal. Both statements are false.†

Faith was long ago defined as believing what you know ain't true. By such a parody of faith Western man today retains a parody of hope, and so contrives to go on living.‡

Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And hope without an object cannot live.

Hope in despite of inconceivable disaster is the special mark of supernatural faith. It is, in fact, the chief psychological advantage of religion. Mr. Forster and his people have rejected Christianity, except on certain matters as a guide for behaviour. In its place they have adopted no alternative religion. Yet the memory of religious hope persists like the habit of a drug. They are haunted by intuitions of a knowledge that evades, and yet appears to call for cogent

\* *Principia Ethica* (2nd ed.), p. 189, author's italics.

† *Abinger Harvest* (1940), p. 67. Compare, *What I Believe* (1939), this maxim by the same author: "One must be fond of people and trust them if one is not to make a mess of life, and therefore it is essential that they should not let one down. They often do."

‡ For the formal elaboration of such a position see *The Philosophy Of "As If"*, by Hans Vaihinger (London, Kegan Paul & Co.).

definition. "Things that I can't phrase," Margaret Schlegel says, "have helped me."\* Whatever helps us must be other than our own private strength. The statement, therefore, implies empirical knowledge of an objective, beneficial power or powers. "Things", however that she "can't phrase" cannot, that is, formulate or understand. And it is so with Mr. Forster. Having no precise conceptions, he has no precise language to discuss the world behind "the realistic world".†

He felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole time—he didn't know at what, never would know, never could know, and that was why he felt sad.

(*A Passage to India*, ch. XX.)

Mr. Forster's ultimate message is an intuition similarly mystifying. A realistic presentation of the kind of life he knows: and then in each of his novels a sudden shock, a series of crises interrupts the even flow of social life, and seems to bring us to the verge of some stupendous revelation, which repeatedly, however, still eludes us in the end.

## (II)

"It will be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man." It may be so. Few at any rate who read it will forget that most remarkable account of a performance of the symphony in *Howards End*. For technical dexterity and subtle understanding of subjective moods, the author has achieved a *tour de force* in his account of impressions evoked in the minds of five listeners. This and the strange adventure in the Caves at Malabar, the haunting echo, have been generally acknowledged as the best of Mr. Forster's many notable achievements in the art of psychological narration. They have another trait in common that has never been sufficiently

\* *Howards End*, ch. XLIV.

† This is, perhaps, the place to refer in passing to the language of the definition given by Lowes Dickinson for Mr. Forster's purpose in his fiction. *Realistic* commonly is used to distinguish certain kinds of mental operation, certain attitudes of mind, and certain methods or techniques in the representational arts. Here it seems to carry a suggestion of the meaning that is commonly attached to the term *real*: but has the strategic advantage that by imprecision it evades explicit differentiation of *reality* from *value*. It hints, but does not state that value may, perhaps, be unreal. If there is, in fact, a "background" to "the realistic world", *value* ought to do for it as well as any other name. Unless it is meant (what the phrasing—"value (or whatever it is)"—would seem to imply) that value is known and exists; and that it may or may not be present as part of our experience. But how, unless as part of our experience, can it be known? The language is ambiguous and leaves the point unsettled.

observed. Both of them betray an odd disease or eccentricity in Mr. Forster's mind and sensibility: the paramount importance he attaches to musical sounds, to the incomprehensible expression of emotion and desire. It is a cult of music, both in itself as an experience, and in its operation as a means of understanding the significance of life. "The belief that music is the deepest of the arts and deep beneath the arts—I do," says Mr. Forster, "hold that faith."\* That such a faith is commonly diffused among his readers may, perhaps, explain their failure to remark upon its strangeness, and the curious significance it has throughout his work.

The kingdom of music is not the kingdom of this world; it will accept those whom breeding and intellect and culture have alike rejected. The commonplace person begins to play, and shoots into the empyrean without effort, whilst we look up, marvelling how he has escaped us, and thinking how we could worship him and love him, would he but translate his visions into human words, and his experience into human actions. Perhaps he cannot; certainly he does not, or does so very seldom.

(*A Room With a View*, ch. II.)

Like the kingdom of Heaven in holy writ, election to this kingdom comes by the unpredictable benefit of grace; it is not proportioned to our merit, nor can we earn it. Note, moreover, the curious echoes of biblical language.

Helen pushed her way out during the applause. She desired to be alone. The music had summed up to her all that had happened or could happen in her career. The notes meant this and that to her and life could have no other meaning.

(*Howards End*, ch. V.)

And of Mrs. Moore we are told in the final novel:

The crush and the smells she could forget, but the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued, it had managed to murmur: "Pathos, piety, courage—they exist but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value." If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted poetry, the comment would have been the same "ou-boum".

(*A Passage to India*, ch. XV.)

And of Adela Quested's share in the same experience:

The echo flourished, raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life. Evil was loose . . . she could hear it

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\* Preface to the Everyman Edition of *A Passage to India*.

entering the lives of others. And Adela spent days in this atmosphere of grief and depression.

(Ibid., ch. XXII.)

All these passages reflect the same tendency: the power of noises, inarticulate, remote, unformulated, to insinuate profound and potent messages, which the available verbal language cannot decipher or reproduce. ". . . would he but *translate* his visions *into human words*". Lucy Honeychurch, we learn, played the piano "on the side of Victory. Victory of what and over what—that is *more than the words of daily life can tell us*".\* "The notes meant this and that . . . and life could have *no other meaning*." The echo, "*so unimportant intellectually*", began, "*in some indescribable way* to undermine her hold on life." The phrases in italics have a common theme: language is inadequate to express fundamental notions on the nature and significance of life. And herein Mr. Forster shows the failure of an age; a shared inheritance of all the post-Cartesian generation. When certainties of science and of logic are alone assured, it may become impossible to state the *transcendental*, moral certainties; and music, unaccompanied by ritual significance or utterance of words, becomes an independent medium for expressing all emotional conviction, moral truth; in which the sentiments of greatest depth are liberated most from the control and understanding of the reason. This is not a private or peculiar fault in Forster. Nor is it altogether novel to his age.† It is none the less of paramount importance for the study of his work.

The significance of life can be expressed only through music: the reality, the detail must be described in human words. It is not, therefore, possible to catalogue the episodes of life and simultaneously convey a sense of their meaning. And to this deficiency of language corresponds a like deficiency of sensibility. "Most of life," says Mr. Forster, "is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it." This, in strict propriety, is not a remark about life, but about the mental disposition of the living. Earlier writers, such as Villon, Rabelais and Chaucer constantly delight us by the zest with which they represent episodes and details that to any modern writer would appear banal or trivial. To see life steadily and see it whole is not a problem for Chaucer: it is almost as natural as sneezing. But to Forster and the people in his novels, most of life is dull and alien.

Looking back on the past six months, Margaret realized the chaotic nature of our daily life, and its difference from the orderly sequence fabri-

\* *A Room With a View*, ch. II.

† Cf. for example Boswell's remarks to Johnson on the subject. *Life*, Anno 1777, Act., p. 68.

cated by historians. Actual life is full of clues and signposts that lead nowhere. With infinite effort we nerve ourselves for a crisis that never comes.

(*Howards End*, ch. XII.)

It was Adela's faith that the whole stream of events is important and interesting, and if she grew bored she blamed herself severely and forced her lips to utter enthusiasms. . . . She was particularly vexed now because she was both in India and engaged to be married, which should have made every moment sublime.

(*A Passage to India*, ch. XIV.)

Only now and then, when attention and the voluntary energies are dormant, there may come a sudden flash of intuition transfiguring events that seemed devoid of any interest or importance when they happened.\* Coming to Mrs. Moore "at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued", the echo managed to convey its baleful message of despair. And to Helen Schlegel at a concert, so abstracted that she carried off a strange man's umbrella, "the music summed up all that had happened or could happen in her career". The utter immobility of an audience at any modern concert is a circumstance of curious significance. Hands, feet, head, eyes, lips appear bereft of current function. They who sway or beat the time with head or feet are, by convention, insufficiently sophisticated: gesture is irrelevant. Sole among the voluntary energies, the faculty of hearing operates, sensation interrupted, rationality suspended: in a state of such imperfect animation modern men receive whatever intimations they are likely to receive about the nature and significance of life.

### (III)

Poets of the seventeenth century possessed a sensibility which could, as Mr. Eliot has observed, "devour any kind of experience".† *Fact* and *value* had not yet been sundered by mechanical philosophy: "A thought to Donne was an experience: it modified his sensibility." But after Donne there set in a gradual "dissociation of sensibility", from which we have never recovered. While the language became more refined, the feeling became more crude". And in the eighteenth century "the sentimental age began, and has continued. The poets revolted against the ratiocinative, the descriptive; they thought and felt by fits, unbalanced; they reflected". The sentimental age continues still; and the dissociative process is observed, not in poetry

\* We may compare the sudden moments of illuminated memory that justified the ways of life to Proust.

† *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921), *passim*.

only, but in every aspect of the civilized mind and soul of the modern West. The feeling, crude and imprecise in sentimental poetry, is cruder and less precise in discursive fiction. It is crudest and least precise of all in orchestral music.\* The ratiocinative, the descriptive, the emotive operations of the mind are now possible only in isolation, separately.

Value should be felt with an appropriate emotion. It should be possible to express and justify it to the reason. It should be possible to relate it to the objects of sensation, manifested in a form we can describe, can see with the eyes of the mind, in a form we might expect to see with the body's eyes.

Spit on my face you Jewes, and pierce my side,  
Buffet and scoffe, scourge, and crucifie mee,  
For I have sinn'd, and sinn'd, and onely hee,  
Who could do no iniquitie, hath died.†

So Donne described the supreme embodied manifestation of value; in a figure authorized by the full intellectual weight of theology; with a violent agitation of rhythm betraying strong emotion; and in language so profane, mundane, precise and actual, that every word of it might as well be applied to his own body as to the body of God, who had "cloth'd himself in vile man's flesh", and died.

Margaret felt the grotesque impact of the unseen upon the seen, and saw issuing from a forgotten manger at Bethlehem this torrent of coins and toys. . . . She was not a Christian in the accepted sense: she did not believe that God had ever dwelt among us as a young artisan. These people, or most of them, believed it, and if pressed would affirm it in words. But the visible signs of their belief were Regent Street and Drury Lane, a little mud displaced, a little money spent, a little food cooked, eaten and forgotten, inadequate. But in public who shall ever express the unseen adequately? It is private life that holds out the mirror to infinity; personal intercourse. and that alone that ever hints at a personality beyond our daily vision.

(*Howards End*, ch. X.)

The language is sufficiently remarkable to justify analysis. We note the modern name for a transcendent actuality: "the unseen". Observe the adjective that indicates how Margaret felt at the notion of God incarnate "in vile man's flesh". It is "grotesque". (Jug-jug to dirty ears.) And so it must inevitably seem to the modern mind,

\* "Imprecise", of course, implies "crude". If we compare the respective moods of hope conveyed in the last movement of Beethoven's *Fifth* Symphony and in Dante's *Paradiso*, we may prefer the first, but the second is a more precise communication, and accordingly less crude. In Dante, the mood of hope is conveyed in terms which also communicate the grounds of hope. Beethoven makes us hope: but hope for what? And on what authority?

† John Donne, *Holy Sonnets*, XI.



prepared to recognize whatever can be measured, weighed, dissected: that alone. It is an unconvincing metaphor to say that "private life holds out the mirror to infinity". *Mirror* is a satisfactory emblem: we can see it with the mind's eye; we know the common use of it. But "*private life holds out the mirror*"—how can we realize such a scene as that? Presumably, we must imagine *private life* in the figure of a person. In itself, however, the phrase evokes no image whatsoever. And how, unless it first become incarnate, how in Heaven's name can *infinity* be reflected in a mirror? The failure of this metaphor betrays a deeper failure, a fundamental defect of sensibility. It marks a failure to integrate the knowledge of sense and the knowledge of value, to present them as a unified perception. It implies an utter extrusion of the supersensible order from the circumstantial elements of knowledge and experience. It is this respect that makes the sensibility shewn in these novels inadequate, stunting because effective for a far more limited range of knowledge than, for instance, Donne's. The point is not that Donne is a better writer because he is a Christian. (Indeed as literary practitioners no useful comparison can be made between the two.) But Donne's poetic sensibility is so equipped that he can recognize and represent a supernatural actuality, can give a proper form to moral value. A pagan suckled in some creed outworn would enjoy a similar advantage, if he could "see old Triton wind his wreathed horn".\*

#### (IV)

Extrusion of the supernatural order means that natural life itself becomes the only source of certain good. Animal comfort, mental refinement, personal affection: in ascending order, this is the scale of goods, the proper matters for desire. Delight in all these things came easily to Chaucer's folk: but neither comfort, nor the pleasure of the things they heard and saw, nor the companionship of those with whom they travelled was for them a principal object of desire. It was no holiday excursion, but "the holy, blisful martir for to seke" that made them pilgrims on the road to Canterbury. And with the common, fundamental purpose settled in his mind,

\* Compare the slow decay of religious painting in Europe. Fra Angelico exhibited sacred history in the scenery of his own time and place, and in contemporary dress. A painter such as Holman Hunt excluded every modern detail. In such recent work as Rouault's *Christ en Banlieue*, or as certain stained-glass window designs by Evie Hone, supernatural and contemporary elements are combined to form a single composition: but with necessary violence to accurate representation; figure and landscape are grotesquely drawn by Rouault, appear distorted. So the man born blind at first saw other men as trees walking. Nevertheless, as the analogy suggests, the impulse revealed by such experiments is healthy.

each pilgrim could turn with unembarrassed, ready zest to whatsoever incident the day might bring. It is not easy to extract from any object an appropriate delight. Yet, until we do so, life is little more than shadows of desire. We need to know the nature of the excellence of that which is the source of our delight; to know its provenance of value and its necessary bounds; and neither to lose the satisfaction, nor resent the limitation, nor regret it. Now the will of man requires to have a permanent attachment; therefore needs a changeless object as the goal of its ambition. Chaucer's people longed "to goon on pilgrimage" because they longed for Heaven, which was symbolized objectively for them by Becket's tomb. But if we lack real belief in a changeless object, this emotion tends to seek for an attachment in the world of changing things: and our desire for them becomes inordinate, greater than their measure; tends to look for a satisfaction no created thing can give. We resent the limitations, the impermanence of natural things. Delight in them becomes nostalgic, bitter with regret. "Smale foules maken melodie," said Chaucer, noting with appropriate delight; reporting a fact and finding pleasure in the mere reporting of it. Later poets are unable to attend with appropriate joy. "Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill," said Milton to the nightingale, betraying an irrelevant emotion, a preoccupation incompatible with an adequate response, that leads him to anthropomorphic misinterpretation of the song. And Herrick writes *To Violets*, desiring them to stay, and writes *To Daffodils*, lamenting that they haste away so soon.\*

So it comes about that, through the lack of a precise apprehension of value, Mr. Forster's apprehension of phenomena is also imprecise. His presentation of the world is deficient in communicated sensuality: that is, in images repellent or attractive to the senses, sight and touch and taste and smell. "Odours from the abyss",† metaphysical aromas, we are told about: but odours from the garden or the closet, or the kitchen, not at all. His people are not readily presented to the mind's eye. We know them psychologically or morally as persons; as we may know a man living in another land by frequent correspondence; or as persons dead and buried, Pepys and Chesterfield, are known from private letters or a diary. Nimble they recommend themselves to conscience and

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\* Since the Renaissance, the disproportion of sentiment and stimulus has become, with every generation, wider. *Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*, said Pascal. Would not their sudden utterance prove even more alarming? Compare such a romantic specimen (selected at random) as Lamartine's *muets rochers* (*Le Lac*, v, p. 49). Such an epithet as *muet*, with its implied reproach for taciturnity, suggests that the writer was imperfectly acquainted with the nature and appropriate activity of rocks. It is as though one said "inedible statistics".

† *Howards End*, ch. XIV.

affection: but it comes as a surprise to learn that Cecil Vyse, a man we know as few men know their cook or their solicitor, wore *pince-nez*.<sup>\*</sup> Stephen Wonham, Gino, George Emerson, Leonard Bast, Aziz: each of the novels represents a young man as an object of affection or desire. Compare, however, what our senses know of George or Gino, with, for example, all they know of Joseph Andrewes. Few are the impressions realized to us of vegetables, animals; the weather; whether people smoke and what they smoke; of food and drink distasteful, appetizing. All these are referred to, but for moral, psychological or social implications. The observed fact is important as a clue, a footprint in the sand; significant because by implication it betrays something other than itself. "Saddles of mutton," we are told, "were trundled up to expectant clergymen," at Simpson's in the Strand: but this is told to indicate the type of clergyman, and not the type of food. That whole luncheon party (*Howards End*, ch. XVII, *passim*) was symbolical, or rather symptomatic: Margaret Schlegel's first tentative exploring of her future husband's world; the world of Henry Wilcox, who approved the Simpson *plat du jour* for reasons gastronomically irrelevant: "So thoroughly Old English, don't you agree?" And her reply was a matter of interpretation also, not of appetite: "'Yes,' said Margaret, who didn't."

"Tell me, though, Miss Schlegel, do you really believe in the supernatural and all that?"

"Too difficult a question."

"Why's that? Gruyère or Stilton?"

"Gruyère, please."

"Better have Stilton."

"Stilton. Because, though I don't believe in auras, and think theology's only a half-way house. . . ."

"Yet there may be something in it all the same," he concluded with a frown.

"Not even that. It may be half-way in the wrong direction. I can't explain."

This remarkable exchange deserves analysis. Attention is divided between cheese and metaphysics, between things that are of nature and the nature of things that are. Characteristically, the views of metaphysics are confusing and confused in form and matter: "supernatural and all that", "something in it all the same", "may be half-way in the wrong direction". Mr. Wilcox is embarrassed, on his guard. In Margaret's subtler mind there seems to be a willing suspension of clarity: not alone is she uncertain, she is uncertain what it is she is uncertain of. "Belief" in anything depends on fact,

<sup>\*</sup> *A Room With a View*, ch. XI. The contrast with Chaucer could, of course, be extended here.

what is or isn't. Whether a thing is half-way right or wrong is a question of value, interpretation, presupposes what the former question asks. Margaret evades the first on grounds of an irrelevant uncertainty about the second question.

Fundamental doubt is at work in both these minds. It is not the gay, satirical, cerebral doubt of intelligent sceptics, as Gibbon, Voltaire, Mr. George Bernard Shaw; men whose doubts are merely to question the current accepted enunciations of thought: and whose hope and energy spring from the tacit assumption, confirmed by the feelings and will, of beliefs that reason is ready and eager to jettison. Nor is it quite the troubled mood of Tennyson and Browning; "honest doubt", that furrowed up the brow of Matthew Arnold, ever conscious of the ebbing tide of energy and virtue, yet unable to believe, lacking grace. This doubt has permeated far below the level of intelligence; has begun to infect emotion, to disorganize desire.

"I can't explain, I don't believe in all these fads, and yet I don't like saying that I don't believe in them."

Henry seemed unsatisfied, and said: "So you won't give me your word that you don't hold with astral bodies and all the rest of it?"

"I could," said Margaret, surprised that the point was of any importance to him. "Indeed, I will. But why do you want this settled?"

"I don't know."

... Margaret was silent for a moment, and then changed the subject.

"We begin to live," said Yeats, "when we conceive life as a tragedy." It may be so. At any rate, before we can begin, we must believe we know what life is all about. It doesn't greatly matter that we're wrong, if we feel certain that we're right: *possunt quia posse videntur*. Fundamental doubt leaves very little time or appetite for cheese.\* No more than half Margaret's mind is free to make the choice, "Gruyère or Stilton?" "Gruyère, please." Her answer probably represents no more than a conditioned reflex action, grounded less in appetite than in cosmopolitan prejudice. Henry, insistently insular, compels her to change: "Better have Stilton." Without any more ado, without apparent interest, Margaret changes: "Stilton. Because, though I don't believe in auras . . ." So much for cheese.

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\* The Chinese appear to have maintained a stable civilization, based on deliberate exclusion of all metaphysical enquiry. Perhaps Greek metaphysics and the religion of the Incarnation make such perpetuated poise a feat impossible for Western minds.

## (V)

Nothing, as Lecky remarks, has been so striking in the history of the past three hundred years as the almost universal decline in our sense of the miraculous. The powers of light and the powers of darkness were formerly regarded as visibly contending for the mastery in the world. It is no longer so. Only on certain portentous occasions is the fabric of our modern life disturbed by what appear to be the shadows of a world beyond the world of everyday. For most of us the veil of the temple trembles only when we fall in love, or when we face the prospect of our own, or the accomplished fact of someone else's death. On such occasions, the orbit of our daily life is brought into direct, brief and startling relationship with interests and conceptions that transcend the natural world of everyday. It will be fitting to conclude these remarks by a brief examination of the way Mr. Forster deals with such events.

Personal affection, raised to a high degree of tension as romantic love, was a motive of considerable force in European culture. The genesis and cause of it is hard to understand: and may, perhaps, remain a mystery still in spite of all enquiry. It is by no means a necessary element of civilization: the Chinese were without it, to the Jews it was hardly known. In the West it has been associated closely with religion, blended in subservience and sublimated to it, as in Plato, as with Dante; or frustrated and in opposition to it, as in the mediaeval chivalrous tradition of the Troubadours. The rationalizing motive and generating principle of love in both these forms has, however, been the same. Religion permits the sublimation whereby a man's affection for another of his kind becomes transformed, absorbed into love of an Ideal Beauty, God or the Mother of God. Religion, on the other hand, provokes the adulterous lover to his ecstasies of idolatrous conceit. Now the past three centuries in Europe have been remarkable for the slow but steady evaporation of religious faith and feeling. The generated energy of romantic love has consequently dwindled, though the evidence in literature has been less immediate. Thus, for example, in the admirable novels of Jane Austen, there is no preoccupation with the real presence of God, no indication of the supernatural passion whereby men in ancient days and mediaeval days were warmed to a white heat of love. Yet the daily round of common life is still troubled from time to time, can almost become transformed by the sudden mutual attraction generated in two persons with an authority far stronger, far more urgent than mere reason and convenience would allow. This, however, is an irrational survival in Miss Austen's world, a relic of that love for which the ancient race was martyred. And

although it has survived an even paler ghost in modern times, and is still invoked in novels and the mythology of Hollywood, we may doubt whether men today are often capable of loving in the old, high way of love.

As a bathtub lined with white porcelain,  
When the hot water gives out or goes tepid,  
So is the slow cooling of our chivalrous passion,  
O my much praised but not-altogether-satisfactory lady.

On Mr. Forster's reckoning, personal intercourse is the greatest good we know or can conceive. Three types of intercourse are possible. There is friendship. There is passion or romance. There is marriage, which is partly friendship, partly a sustained romance. Now passion, the supreme concentration of affection, ought, more than any other form of relationship, to justify itself in terms of value. But Mr. Forster's treatment of it is marked by a characteristic ambiguity. While acknowledging "the poetry, the wonder, the magic" of "these chance collisions of human beings", he is apparently unable to conceive them in sustained association with more ordinary moments.

"Lucy, I want to ask something of you that I have never asked before."

At the serious note in his voice she stepped frankly and kindly towards him.

"What, Cecil?"

"Hitherto never—not even that day on the lawn when you agreed to marry me——"

He became self-conscious and kept glancing round to see if they were observed. His courage had gone.

"Yes?"

"Up to now I have never kissed you."

She was as scarlet as if he had put the thing most indelicately.

She was right to blush, for Cecil had indeed put the thing most indelicately in putting it at all. To use a favourite term of D. H. Lawrence, this is *mental* passion: an attempt, in default of an authentic emotion, to make do with the reason and the will. Between the desire and the action falls the shadow of a conscious intention.

At that supreme moment he was conscious of nothing but absurdities. She gave such a business-like lift to her veil. As he approached her he found time to wish that he could recoil. As he touched her, his gold pince-nez became dislodged and was flattened between them.

Such was the embrace. He considered with truth, that it had been a



failure. Passion should believe itself irresistible . . . it should never ask for leave where there is a right of way. Why could he not do as any labourer or navy?

(*A Room With a View*, ch. IX.)

"Passion *should* believe itself irresistible." Surely this ambiguous remark has a familiar ring? "One must behave as if one is immortal, and as if civilization is eternal. Both statements are false." Passion is good. One must behave *as if* it is also irresistible, and then it may in fact prove to be so. The tone, which is partly nostalgic, partly ironic, is explained by this: that the author, by a conscious, critical judgement, can perceive in passion *value*; but the familiar inability to connect value and fact leaves him still unable to conceive passion as *real*. Or to employ for a moment Cardinal Newman's language, Mr. Forster has a notional belief but not a real belief in value; and accordingly he fails to imagine passion as behaviour.

"These chance collisions of human beings", moments of passion do in fact occur from time to time, but as

intense moments isolated  
With no before and after.

To the younger Schlegel sister, Helen, such a moment came on the evening when she first met Paul Wilcox, and he kissed her in the darkness. "Her life was to bring her nothing more intense than the embrace of this boy who played no part in it." But the moment was isolated: nothing had led up to it, and nothing followed.

"Tell me now," said Margaret, "what happened on the Monday morning."

"It was over at once."

"How, Helen?"

"I was still happy while I dressed, but as I came downstairs I got nervous, and when I went into the dining-room I knew it was no good. There was Evie—I can't explain—managing the tea-urn; and Mr. Wilcox reading the 'Times'."

"Was Paul there?"

"Yes; and Charles was talking to him about Stocks and Shares, and he looked frightened."

Margaret saw horror latent in the scene, and Helen's next remark did not surprise her.

"Somehow when that kind of man looks frightened it is too awful. When I saw all the others so placid, and Paul mad with terror in case I said the wrong thing, I felt for a moment that the whole Wilcox family was a fraud, just a wall of newspapers and motor-cars and golf-clubs, and that if it fell I should find nothing behind it but panic and emptiness."

(*Howards End*, ch. IV.)

We must build, says Mr. Forster, "the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man". Paul Wilcox failed to build that bridge, and justly stands condemned. But Helen Schlegel had one other such romantic moment with another man, and she too failed to build the bridge.

"I drew him to me. I felt very lonely myself. He is not to blame. He would have gone on worshipping me. I want never to see him again, though it sounds appalling. I wanted to give him money and feel finished. Oh, Meg, the little that is known about these things. . . . Both times it was loneliness, and the night, and panic afterwards."

(*Howards End*, ch. XL.)

This incapacity to realize passion in the form of a sustained relationship is a central mark of Mr. Forster's mind and art. A significantly high proportion of his characters are widowed or unwed. For the rest, there is no attempt to show the life of any happily-married couple from within. We hear of married people from the author, or we watch them with the eyes of other characters: but never are we given an imaginative *entrée* to the quality and detail of the common life they share. Thus, in *The Longest Journey*, we are told of two more or less ideally happy unions: but they are both represented from without, and from a spectator's point of view. We know that Gerald and Agnes loved with passion, because Rickie saw them clasped in one another's arms. And the brief, illicit romance of Rickie's mother is revealed when both lovers have been many years dead. But Agnes's long and supremely unsuccessful second marriage, the "longest journey" she and Rickie go together, forms the central theme of the book. It is shown to us in detail and from within. Again, the principal motif of *A Room With a View* is the falling in love of George Emerson and Lucy Honeychurch. Their discovery of passion, however marks the climax of the novel, and we leave them on their honeymoon in Italy, embracing like two lovers on the screen. No doubt they both lived happily ever after, as all lovers do in Hollywood and Fairyland: but if they did we are left to invent the details for ourselves. In *A Passage to India*, there is talk about the marriages of four among the people we are shown from within. Aziz is a widower. We learn about his happy married life as something over long before the tale began. Adela and Ronnie are engaged; and we trace the subtle history of their mutual experience. But it terminates in nothing. We leave them both still unmarried, and, for all we know to the contrary, permanently so. In the earlier portions of the novel we are shown certain crucial episodes through Fielding's eyes and from his point

of view. This intimacy does not survive his bachelor days, however. He slips into the background; and, when we next hear of him, has married and already is a father. But the episode occurs off-stage, in England: and we have no further share in his private life.

## (VI)

Last subject of all, we pass to Mr. Forster's treatment of death. One afternoon at Howards End, Margaret Schlegel, now the wife of Henry Wilcox, met a strange, eccentric woman of the district, old Miss Avery, from whom she learned the history of the house that she was destined to inherit.

"Mrs. Howard was never created to run a farm."

"Had they no man to help them?" Margaret asked.

Miss Avery replied: "Things went on until there were no men."

"Until Mr. Wilcox came along," corrected Margaret, anxious that her husband should receive his dues.

"I suppose so, but Ruth should have married a—no disrespect to say this, for I take it you were intended to get Wilcox any way, whether she got him first or no."

"Whom should she have married?"

"A soldier!" exclaimed the old woman. "Some real soldier."

Margaret was silent. It was a criticism of Henry's character far more trenchant than any of her own.

(*Howards End*, ch. XXXIII.)

It was a criticism, therefore (such the implication is), of Margaret also, who could not have formulated such a criticism. The practical man of affairs, the sympathetic intellectual: imagination measures both these figures by the symbol of a soldier, and is satisfied with neither. What Miss Avery thought of Henry, we are not directly told: but she betrays, by her speech, some doubt about his title to the dignity and full moral stature of a man. Her acquiescence is ambiguous when Margaret makes that claim for him. "I suppose so," she replies. And the image of a soldier she proposes in his place receives emphatic definition: "Some real soldier". *Real*—it is a strange word to use; as though her mind perceived the figure of a fake alternative. And, since the soldier is conceived as the desiderated substitute for Henry, we infer that he is real in some degree or sense that Henry is unreal. The Wilcoxes are men of action, practical men, business men:

"They breed and they also work," said Margaret, conscious of some invitation to disloyalty, which was also echoed by the very breeze and by the songs of the birds. "It certainly is a funny world, but so long as men like my husband govern it, I think it'll never be a bad one—never really bad."

Soldiers too are practical: they breed presumably; they work; they help to govern the world. Traffic of the world is the chief pre-occupation of both classes. Only in one respect their functions differ. The soldier is concerned to regulate, not life alone, but also death. And death, *le portique ouvert sur des cieux inconnus*, which is the exodus and end of the world's affairs is our one direct and universal, instantaneous link with whatsoever worlds transcend the world of everyday. It connects immediately "the realistic world and the background of value (or whatever it is)". And if business men and soldiers see life steadily, the soldier is more apt to see it whole, because he sees it to the end.

The weakness she detected in the Wilcox family, Miss Avery detected in the Schlegel family too. She perceived an affinity of temper that would make their union natural: "I take it you were intended to get Wilcox any way." The same weakness permeates all Mr. Forster's world, where we mix familiarly with business men and clergymen, administrators, schoolmasters, intellectuals, Italians, Indians, women, even, now and then, the lower middle class: but never come to know a soldier or sailor or a murderer or a saint. No heroes are included in his gallery. Nor does life as he displays it call for heroism. He has heard about heroes, and he knows there have been saints. If he fails or neglects to represent either type, it is a failure not of the critical intelligence, but of the sensibility and will. He lacks imaginative power to invent episodes and characters symbolic of a scale of values higher than utility. Those men have something to live for who have something they will die for, be it region or religion, honour or love. And the inability to realize any of these motives in action lies at the root of Mr. Forster's failure to realize the fullness of natural life. He is committed to belief in no religion. He is bound by no traditional attachment to a region. And the conception of honour, which calls for the collocation of intensity with goodness, is beyond his stretch of imaginative power. In life as he presents it, there is no place for death, no rational motive for inflicting or accepting it. And in this respect Mr. Forster is no stranger to the age in which he lives.

Much in modern life that is uncertain, half-hearted, may be explained, perhaps, by our lack of a common attitude to death: or by our lack of any attitude susceptible of cogent definition. "One must behave," says Mr. Forster, "as if one is immortal, and as if civilization is eternal. Both statements are false." His position is equivocal, confused: without an intellectual faith to make the thought of death supportable, he covets still the unruffled, involuntary calm of the believer. He proposes to achieve it by a process closely akin to self-hypnosis. "Both statements are false": we must assume them "to be true if we are to go on eating and working and

travelling and keep open a few breathing holes for the human spirit". It is this very ambiguity about belief, this mixture of intellectual detachment and pragmatical attachment, that makes Mr. Forster's position representative, in its virtues and its weakness, of the modern Western mind. We can no longer believe in personal immortality, heaven and hell. But the accustomed fortifications of our courage, our traditional modes of feeling, are an inheritance from former generations who believed in all those things. And we have still to devise a formal education that will enable us to live at peace with the world and with our new beliefs. People in the past have believed in immortality; and have based their lives, and built their several worlds on that belief; but the basis of their faith has always been the compelling conviction of a truth received; and not the expectation of such consequent but accidental benefits as Mr. Forster names. There is only one effective way to maintain "breathing holes for the human spirit". Life must be controlled, the human will subdued and organized in accordance with whatever principles we can accept and hold as true. If we cannot believe in immortality, we must contrive, as men in other times and other lands have done to live without that comforting belief.

If we really want to live, we'd better learn the reason why;  
If we don't, it doesn't matter, but we'd better start to die.

There have been many variations, but essentially not more than three attitudes to death can be distinctly formulated. We must attempt to understand it; or determine to endure it; or agree to disregard it and forget it while we can. The last of these seems to have been the Chinese way of living. Never widely practised in the West, it is adopted by no character in Forster: and that alone needs here to be remarked wherein it differs from the attitude of heedless modern multitudes whom yearly death takes by surprise: it must be chosen by deliberate election, and sustained by a perpetual endeavour of the will. The other attitudes have both been fairly common in the practice of the West at different times. The first is the method of religion: to explain death, and so transcend the catastrophe of dying. Fully realized, accepted by the mind at all its levels, religious faith can remove the fear of dying altogether. It can even make men ready to accept death with joy. The fear of death, Dr. Westermarck observes, is hardly known in certain oriental lands; where any man condemned to execution can procure a substitute prepared to take his place for a fairly modest fee. The practise of a like fanatic zeal has provoked the Christian Church to formal acts condemning those who seek by rash designs to earn a martyr's fate and fortune. Such zeal, however, is compatible, in

virtue of the premises it rests on, with an energetic joy in natural life. Nor should it properly be likened to the suicidal tendency of late so very common in the West: the Gadarean vertigo of life in the modern world, where all things tend, as has been justly said, *visibilibiter ad non esse*. This religious kind of fervour in the East has been associated commonly with patriotic sentiment. Very often, as for example in Japan, the two cannot well be separated. In Europe and America a like combination of religious and of regional attachment has been known. The Christian priest consecrates the soldier's patriotic sacrifice. Religion calls for heroism; but offers compensation and the prospect of reward: insists on tragedy; but furnishes a method of transcending it: beyond the utmost gloom, displays the light of supernatural hope: the universe of man, *sub specie aeternitatis*, is perceived as a Divine Comedy.

Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum:  
Grata superveniet, quae non sperabitur, hora.

Men must endure  
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:  
Ripeness is all.

That is the resolution to endure, and is the antique Roman attitude to death: the mood of men who, having found no recompense, accept the necessary evil; steeling their wills to an heroic, stoic pride. Virtue, honour and duty are the motives and the sanctions of a conscientious programme that exacts, as religion does, heroic resolution: but, unlike religion, offers no reward.

Mr. Forster's beliefs might justly make a stoic: but his temper craves the comforts of religion. It is the author himself who speaks, when Margaret Schlegel stands at the grave of Mrs. Wilcox: "Perhaps the last word would be hope—hope even this side of the grave." It is hard to relate such a sentiment to the situation that evokes it. Mrs. Wilcox is buried in the earth. She has joined the legionary dead. Why should that fact, as such, bring hope of any kind? And how, by any rational interpretation of the words, hope *this side of the grave*? The feeling is not extravagant merely. It is utterly unfounded. Yet it persists. Later in the same novel, when Leonard Bast lies dead in the garden, Margaret uses the same words again:

Ah, no; there was beauty and adventure behind, such as the man at her feet had yearned for; there was hope this side of the grave; there were truer relationships beyond the limits that fetter us now.

(*Howards End*, ch. XLIII.)



All this may very well be true. There may be such relationships. Such a hope may yet be justified. But the inference can hardly be established on the evidence of Leonard's body dead. There is a deeply-rooted perversity behind the confusion of these words. The author is unable to explain death, but unwilling to accept his inability.

Failure to establish a coherent attitude to death is tacitly pervasive throughout all Mr. Forster's fiction. It is reflected in the texture of his narrative style. Death comes as a shock: it is always sudden, stealthy and outrageous. This impression is conveyed by several characteristic devices. We are reading through a catalogue of commonplace events: and almost fail to remark, perhaps are forced to return and read again, before we grasp the significance of one obscure, appalling clause.

As for Lilia, someone said to her, "It is a beautiful boy." But she had died in giving birth to him.

(*Where Angels Fear to Tread*, ch. IV.)

"Put on your greatcoat, dearest," she said to him.

He was not often irritable or rude, but he answered, "Oh, I shan't catch cold. I do wish you wouldn't keep on bothering."

He did not catch cold, but while he was out his mother died.

(*The Longest Journey*, ch. II.)

They laid Leonard, who was heavy, on the gravel; Helen poured water over him.

(*Howards End*, ch. XLI.)

"They laid Leonard, who was heavy, on the gravel." It would be natural to convey some trivial information thus. It is monstrously, outrageously unnatural to announce a man's death in such a manner. The effect is deliberate, however. That is how Mr. Forster can best imagine death. Any habitual mood of expectation must inevitably modify the form of our experience. If, then, we live by the tacit supposition that the sequence of events will never cease, death must always seem most normal when most sudden. At the instant when it happens, it will find us unprepared: and so we fail at first to remark it, or our minds refuse to assess its true significance. Only in retrospect, we know that something quite abnormal had occurred. In the narratives just quoted, this impression is enforced by a grammatical device. Apart from one clause in each, the preterite tense is used throughout: "They *laid* Leonard on the gravel", "Helen *poured* water over him", "As for Lilia, someone *said* to her". But the most dramatic statement is conveyed in the past anterior tense: "Leonard, who *was dead*", ". . . she *had died*

in giving him birth".\* The commonplace events we understand as they occur: but our habitual mood makes it easier to contemplate death as an event already past. If moreover we attempt to locate the episode in time, connect a man's decease with what took place immediately before and after, it is commonly impossible to do so on the evidence of what Mr. Forster has been able to report. We can point to a time when Lilia or Leonard was alive: and we know that by a certain moment each of them was dead. But the precise, particular instant at which either of them died we cannot tell. "Life which had given no warning seemed to make no comment now. The incident was outside nature and would surely pass away like a dream." "Outside nature", that is to say beyond the bounds of what we had expected or have skill to understand.

Sometimes the news of death is not explicitly announced, but is given by allusion, indirectly, so that we have to pause and reflect before we understand what has been only implied.

The face was already chilly, but thanks to Philip, it was no longer wet. Nor would it again be wetted by any tear.

(*Where Angels Fear to Tread*, ch. VIII.)

Mrs. Wilcox walked out of King's Cross between her husband and her daughter, listening to both of them.

(Chapter XI.)

The funeral was over.

(*Howards End*, chapters X—XI.)

The second extract also illustrates another device. The last words of one chapter leave us the picture of someone alive and well. The first words of the next chapter announce his death.

... she had a thrill of joy when she thought of the weak boy (Rickie) in the clutches of the strong boy (Gerald).

Gerald died that afternoon. He was broken up in the football match. Rickie and Mr. Pembroke were on the ground when the accident took place.

(*The Longest Journey*, IV—V.)

All these are formal narrations by the author. Psychologically, the most interesting account of death in Forster is the episode of the unknown Italian in *A Room With a View* (ch. IV). A young English girl is taking a morning walk in Florence. She has grown

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\* "He did not catch cold, but while he was out his mother *died*." The narrative of death is in the preterite here; but the effective presentation has the force of a past anterior. The record is of Rickie's experience: we view the event as with his eyes. It occurred "while he was out". That is in effect to say: "When he *returned*, his mother *was dead*." He discovered it as something already past.

a trifle bored with the succession of events. Nothing, she reflects, ever happens to her. Events continue in the following succession:

Two Italians by the Loggia had been bickering about a debt. "Cinque lire," they had cried, "cinque lire!" They sparred at each other, and one of them was hit lightly upon the chest. He frowned; he bent towards Lucy with a look of interest, as if he had an important message for her. He opened his lips to deliver it, and a stream of red came out between them and trickled down his unshaven chin.

That was all.

That at least is all Lucy perceives. As a matter of fact she has just seen a murder. Her habitual mood of expectation leaves her unprepared for such an outrageous episode; and everything she watches takes the form of some more commonplace event. One of the men is "hit lightly on the chest", or so to her appears the fatal stab. He frowns, and bends towards her with a look of interest—so she interprets the agony of death in the expression of his face. He opens his mouth to deliver a message, and at this point, for the first time, the scene begins to appear grotesque: a stream of red issues between his lips and trickles down his chin. The episode comes to an end before she has time to interpret the final detail.

That was all. A crowd rose out of the dusk. It hid this extraordinary man, and bore him away to the fountain. Mr. George Emerson happened to be a few paces away, looking at her across the spot where the man had been. How very odd! Across something.

Looking at her in fact across a pool of the dead man's blood.

Even as she caught sight of him he grew dim; the palace itself grew dim, swayed above her, fell on her softly, slowly, noiselessly, and the sky fell with it.

She thought: "Oh, what have I done?"

"Oh, what have I done?" she murmured, and opened her eyes.

George Emerson still looked at her, but not across anything. She had complained of dullness, and lo! one man was stabbed, and another held her in his arms. . . .

She repeated: "Oh, what have I done?"

"You fainted."

Even yet she seems not quite aware what has occurred. Finally young Mr. Emerson tells her, though to the end there remains a degree of ambiguity:

"The man is dead—the man is probably dead."

In writing himself the novelist writes his age. The remark is untrue. It fails to account for the great eccentric writers, Sterne or Flann O'Brien, and for the great prophetic writers, Hermann Melville or D. H. Lawrence. But as a counsel of perfection it will serve for Mr. Forster. It states the ideal to which his kind of fiction tends. If then we attempt to discover hidden, sinister implications in his work, it should be clear that we are far from passing judgement on the writer as an artist or as a man. As a man we hardly know him, for his novels are not confessions. And to criticize the radical defects of modern life as he displays it is to praise him as an artist. We acknowledge in his version of experience an aspect of our common situation.

It is, then, as with passion, so with dying. The modern mind fails to connect the catastrophic moment with the ordinary moments, cannot conceive death and life as a single theme. And this, perhaps, is the gravest consequence of our *malaise*, of that dichotomy we feel between reality and value: we have lost the power to grasp, the will to contemplate our final end, individual, irreversible deace. We begin to live when we conceive life as a tragedy; only, that is to say, when we are ready to accept the full conditions. And the quality of modern life suggests a vindication of the ancient paradoxes: "He that would save his life shall lose it. He that will lose his life shall save it." For without belief in death our life at best can be little better than a joyless, frivolous, passionless existence.

PETER AULT.

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## VIRGIL AND WORDSWORTH

By NEVILLE WATTS

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THE end of poetry is happiness, to console us in our sorrows and to confirm us in our joys and to point out to us the true sources of joy. Poetry attains this end by being beautiful and by revealing the beauty of the world. But because truth is a source of joy as much as beauty, poetry is the questing of the soul for truth along the avenue of beautiful speech. Physical science and history also pursue the quest for truth, but the truth they pursue is the truth of phenomena, not of reality. Poetry pursues the truth

behind the truth, the truth of the unchanging human soul face to face with God, with other human souls, and with the world of nature. Science and history progress by discarding their past; they live in perpetual dissolution. Poetry does not progress; Robert Bridges' *Testament of Beauty*, composed after nearly 3000 years of research and accumulated knowledge, is no nearer to the truth than the *Iliad*. The raw material of poetry, human emotion, does not change. But as human experience is cumulative, the human soul becomes increasingly aware of itself, its unfathomable depths and its wide reaches. On this extended area, these revealed abysses, poetry is for ever at work. If it were not so, the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, the *Divina Commedia*, would suffice our need for ever. The simplicity of the pattern of life in the days of the primitive epic is not to be recovered by us, as the complexities of modern thought were beyond the reach of ancient Greece. No poem like the *Iliad* could be composed in Europe today; no poem like Rabbi Ben Ezra could have been written in any year B.C.

But "it is not growing like a tree" that the consciousness of man probes deeper into its own complexities, but by ascertainable leaps. *Ars nihil facit nisi per saltum*. The Creator gives the word, and a tract of Chaos passes into the realm of Cosmos. The creative genius of the creature gives the word, and capacities and sensibilities of the human soul, hitherto undreamed of, are explored and scheduled.

There are no pioneers of the uncharted areas of the soul whose discoveries have been so cardinal as Virgil and Wordsworth. I use the word cardinal advisedly, for upon their achievement, as upon hinges, the doors of human consciousness have twice, at 1900 years' interval, swung wider to the infinite. After Virgil poetry could never be the same as it was before. After Wordsworth, poetry turned over a new leaf. Each ushers in a new era of human sensibility. After each poet had written, and as a result of what he had written, more people felt more deeply, and about more things. Their work enriched, by two marked stages, the bloodstream of humanity.

And it is because they broadened and deepened human sympathies in the same direction and with a similar effect that I have linked their names together. They appeal to the same sort of mind; if you love Virgil, you will almost inevitably love Wordsworth. To that great Virgilian T. R. Glover they were almost interchangeable. "I am never quite certain which name I have used . . . and the listeners have to guess which I mean by the context." They were both poets of—for I hope to avoid as far as possible the vague abstraction Nature—they were both poets of common things. For Wordsworth this was an avowed tenet, and the chief tenet, of his creed; he led a poetic revolution. But though

Virgil published no manifestoes, he too was a revolutionary; the Georgics strike at the roots of the ancient régime more potently than did the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

The conditions of early nurture instilled into each poet the habit and the love of loneliness; and to each loneliness gave eyes that saw the world and men as none of their fellows saw them. Each was the son of a countryman who was, in the Latin sense of the word, *pauper*; each was reared among small farmers of robust independence and hereditary virtues, and small farming, be it noted, involves affectionate intimacy with beast and bird and field; each rankled under a sense of wrong done to a father, a sense which for the Italian, whose father lived until the son was an adult, found expression in the emphasis laid in the *Æneid* upon filial devotion. Each ardently embraced a scientific rationalism, which each discarded, Wordsworth because it led him to "yield up moral questions in despair", Virgil because, as he modestly professes, "the blood ran too chill about his heart" to enable him to sustain the role that Lucretius had played. And each took up in its stead, with humility which grew with growing wisdom, a posture of love and adoration towards all created things, "contented if he might enjoy the things that others understand". For both, peace and joy lay at the heart of things, "*secura quies et nescia fallere vita*", "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation". It is "by the power of joy we see into the life of things", and this power can be achieved only by the renunciation of what the world calls joy. "When I think of the ignorance in which worldlings must be enveloped with respect to the thoughts, feelings and images on which the life of my poems depends, it is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the effect of my work upon the public. . . . The things which I have taken . . . what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls? . . . What have they to do with a life without love?"

o fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,  
agricolas! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,  
fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus,  
si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis  
mane salutantum totis vomit aedibus undam.

"Earth most just"—yes, "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Hers is no easy service. She has no reward for week-end dalliance or sentimental posturing. She offers us blood, tears and sweat, "*labor improbus et duris urgens in rebus egestas*". Life is hard, but from hardness, "*curis acuens mortalia corda*", spring all love and all joy. Man can "turn his necessity to glorious gain".



Who never ate his bread in sorrow,  
 Who never spent the midnight hours  
 Weeping and waiting for the morrow,—  
 He knows you not, ye heavenly powers.

And sovereign among the heavenly powers is love, and love comes not save by pain. It is Virgil alone among ancient poets who discerns this truth, though Euripides had some glimmerings of it; and it is for this perhaps, above all, that Sainte-Beuve writes of him: "La venue même du Christ n'a rien qui étonne quand on a lu Virgile."

Love—not the love of Dido for Æneas nor the philanthropist's love for abstract Man—but the love of men, and of "the least of these". This is the great gulf fixed between Homer and Virgil, as between Pope and Wordsworth. To Homer the common man is but "a name and a number". If he be slain in battle, so much the more glory to his slayer. But every blow dealt wrings the heart of Virgil with its implications—desolated homes, nameless graves, sorrowing parents. Again and again in the last four books of the *Æneid*, where Virgil draws battle-scenes not because he likes them but because the epic tradition demanded them, we catch that tell-tale break in the poet's voice which Suetonius tells us was a feature of his actual reading: *confusae caedis acervum—tunicam mater molli quam neverat auro—Lyrnesi domus alta, solo Laurente sepulcrum—ignarum Laurens habet ora Mimanta—dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos*. It is always the pathos of life which is uppermost to Virgil. To the ghost of Achilles in Homer's underworld life is desirable even at the price of being serf to a lackland tiller of the soil. But, with the still sad music of humanity ringing so loud and persistent in his ears, it is little wonder that Virgil makes Æneas, seeing the souls eagerly awaiting their turns for birth, ask: "quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?"

Across the centuries Virgil and Wordsworth clasp hands as poets of the dumb, the obscure, the uninterpreted. In the great passage at the end of the second Georgic, after painting the bliss of those who live untainted by the fret and fury of civil activity and the fatal blindness of those who struggle for power and wealth and fame, Virgil passes quietly (and I find myself inexplicably thrilled by the mere absence of any connecting word) to the patient labour of the fields by which the race from generation to generation is sustained:

agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro:  
 hinc anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes  
 sustinet; hinc armenta boum meritosque iuencos.

"We need examples of people," writes Ruskin, "who, leaving heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek, not greater wealth but simpler pleasure, not higher fortune but deeper felicity, making the first of possessions self-possession, and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace." It is the pawns upon the board of life who keep the game going. In an age of fierce greed and restless striving, such as Virgil knew and such as we know all too well, to court obscurity and holy poverty demands courage and self-abnegation, but Evander from his little town cries out to Nazareth in those lines which brought tears to the eyes of Fénelon:

*aude, hospes, contemnere opes, et te quoque dignum  
finge deo.*

If there is any sphere beyond time and place where the creations of mortal imagination forgather, there surely Michael and the old Corycian ex-pirate, Margaret, and Silvia the shepherd's daughter, the Cumberland Beggar and Menoetes, "who came of a poor house and his father sowed in a hired plot", meet in close communion.

And it is not only obscure men and women, but obscure moments, that give radiance to life—a sudden glimpse of daffodils by a lake, the song of a Highland reaper heard by chance. Among those who receive the highest honours in Virgil's Elysium last—perhaps because dearest to the poet's heart—are those who "*sui memores aliquos fecere merendo*", "Who by kindness have made some few remember them." "Some few"—for "*alios*" has, I believe, inferior authority to "*aliquos*". Wordsworth counts as "the best portion of a good man's life his little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love". It is in this obscurity that the English poet finds his most fruitful material for the transfiguration of life. Virgil, we are told, resisting all the blandishments of the Emperor who would have drawn him into the eddy of public life, found his happiness "in the pursuits of ignoble ease". Like his own physician Iapis, he would fain have rejected all Apollo's gifts, "augury and the lyre and swift arrows", and "plied dumb arts inglorious". Wordsworth too "both man and boy had been an idler in the land"; in thought and suffering, not in action, lay for him the true significance of life. It was in retirement and solitude that impulses of deeper birth came to him from the outward shows of sky and earth, hill and valley.

Impulses, though not recognizably of deeper birth, came also to Virgil from the same source. Both he and Wordsworth are, in common parlance, poets of "Nature". What is Nature? "Oh, the

country," is the reply "and mountains and trees and flowers and birds and the rest." But if birds, why not men and women? And why not also men's songs and men's nests—suburban streets and music-hall ditties? So let us cease to talk of nature, and speak instead of earth and all that dwell thereon. And having thus socratically clarified our terms, we may proceed to say that Virgil reacts to the earth and its inhabitants more widely and more acutely than any poet who preceded him, and for different reasons. It has been said that the only enjoyment of earth evinced by Greek and Roman poets was either utilitarian or religious. A wood interested them either for the comfort of its shade or for the Dryads that dwelt there. But Virgil is the first to whom air and sky and earth and water are things to be loved in and for themselves. "Life is sweet, brother . . . there's day and night, brother, both sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath." Mopsus in the fifth Eclogue declares that there are three things that charm him only less than Menalcas' song: the whisper of the rising gale, the wave-beaten shore, and the rivers that run down amid their rocky vales. All sweet things, indeed, but things that add nothing to man's material comfort. Water and woods have a special thrill for Virgil, and it is nearly always their sound on which he dwells—Maenalus with his singing grove and vocal pines, Benacus uprising with the surge and thunder of the sea; perhaps it was the beauty born of these murmuring sounds that passed into his verse and imparted to it their own magical cadences. Nor is he content to generalize; he pores over Italy as a man poring over the map of a well-loved English county, linking names of hamlet and hill with remembered images—Hernican rocks dewy with rills, Tetrica and its bristling crags, Abella gazing down from her apple-orchards, Mincius draped in grey reeds, Fucinus with its glassy wave. The very names are music in his ear, as the place names of Sussex are to Mr. Belloc in *The Four Men*: "The river Arun, a valley of sacred water; and Amberley Wild Brook, which is lonely with reeds at evening . . . and Egdean Side, all heath and air . . . and Petworth, little town."

But no likeness between the two poets is more important or more striking than the contrast between the impersonality and objectivity of the one and the utter self-centralization which was the strength, and the weakness, of the other: his strength, because from it grew an intensity of vision which he was able to impart to the world; his weakness, because the loss of that vision led him to formulate as valid for the world at large a creed designed for the consolation of himself alone. The impressions fixed upon his boyhood by lake and mountain were overpowering; they faded, and left him desolate, till he built out of their ruins a theory which was an edifice of pure fancy.

The sounding cataract  
 Haunted me like a passion; the tallrock,  
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
 An appetite . . . That time is past . . .

Not for this

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur, . . . for I have learned  
 To look on nature not as in the hour  
 Of thoughtless youth . . . And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused . . .  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things.

Upon the early stage of this journey Virgil goes hand in hand with Wordsworth. For him too the beauty of the world is an appetite that "has no need of a remoter charm by thought supplied". Yet he gives us hints of something more, of "an interest unborrowed from the eye". "God moves through all the lands, the reaches of the sea, and the abyss of heaven." Bees show signs of this divine impulse; they "court a glorious death" to save their fellows; they, and rooks too, are gladdened by a mysterious thrill in springtime or when showers are over. As for any ulterior feeling, Virgil, if he was aware of it, left it unexpressed, and Wordsworth takes refuge in the vagueness of "something far more deeply interfused". But neither Virgil nor Wordsworth are pantheists, though Virgil may have been transiently attracted by Stoic doctrine. Pantheism, to be consistent, must be a-moral; for if all is equally God, then all is equally good—or equally bad. But there are no poets in whose work conduct counts for so large a proportion of life.

However Virgil may here and there in a passing phrase betray acquaintance with Stoic doctrine, his whole outlook upon life is in direct contradiction to it. For him all the sorrow and all the joy of the world arise from love; and love is cheap at the price of the keenest anguish. And not alone love between man and man or man and woman, but love of man for his beast and of the beast for his offspring. This acuteness of feeling sometimes betrays itself in a double-edged sympathy which leaves us guessing which way the poet's affections tend. Virgil warns the bee-keeper that his hive must not be near the nesting-place of swallows, who

*ore ferunt dulcem nidis immitibus escam.*

Between the two epithets the poet's feelings veer rapidly; in "dulcem" it is with the young swallows, in "immitibus" it has

passed back to the bees. The farmer is urged to clear land by felling trees. He is praised for doing so, though the poor birds are robbed of their homes thereby. So in the simile in the twelfth book of the *Æneid* where Turnus is compared to a wounded lion at bay, our sympathy is clearly meant to be with the lion's victims, but the hunter is described as "latro", which conveys us in a flash to the lion's point of view. In Virgil's treatment of Dido the same transference of sympathy is shown, and more strikingly because here it interferes with—indeed violently throws out of gear—our whole conception of the hero's character. Dido was preconceived by her maker as playing the same part in the *Æneid* as Calypso in the *Odyssey*, a lure to tempt the Man with a Mission from his destined course. But whether or not *Æneas* falls in love with Dido, Virgil certainly does so, and he carries us with him, with results fatal to our appraisement of *Æneas*. A similar development has been remarked in Shakespeare's *Shylock*. The creator of each comes to curse, and stays, if not to bless, at least to pity.

Wordsworth was not gifted with Virgil's wide range of sensibility. But within the circumference which was his own mind he felt intensely. He saw life steadily without seeing it whole. This is exemplified in his treatment of love as a passion. Of love as a deep controlled affection he sings in the "Lucy" poems, one of which—"A slumber did my spirit seal"—is one of the greatest short lyrics in the language. But of passionate love he knew too much to trust himself to write. His affair with Annette Vallon had thrown his soul into turmoil and taught him to value tranquillity as the only mood in which the soul could contemplate truth. Henceforth he imposed upon himself an iron restraint, shunning and repressing all emotion that warred against singleness of vision. Only in one poem, *Vaudracour and Julia*, written to discharge his mind of the burden of its guilty secret, does he write of the transports of love:

Earth breathed in one great presence of the spring,  
 Life turned the meanest of her implements  
 Before his eyes to price above all gold;  
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine,  
 Her chamber-window did surpass in glory  
 The portals of the dawn; all Paradise  
 Could, by the simple opening of a door,  
 Let itself in upon him:—pathways, walks  
 Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank  
 Surcharged within him.

Contrast with this the far more poignant, because more compact and concrete, presentment of Dido's love:

post ubi digressi, lumenque obscura vicissim  
 luna premit, suadentque cadentis sidera somnos,  
 sola domo maeret vacua, stratisque relictis  
 incubat; illum absens absentem auditque videtque.

The difference of key between these two passages arises partly from the temperamental reactions of the two poets to their time-environment: the modern, standing, as he fancied, "on the top of golden hours", is in the major; the ancient, conscious of the deepening shades of an exhausted and disillusioned paganism, is in the minor. But it arises also and chiefly from a difference in the emotion depicted: the one portrays the intoxication of adolescence, the other the melancholy of a woman past her youth to whom love brings no visions of dawn but only a renewal of ancient sorrow.

In later life, after Wordsworth had made a study of Virgil in order to help his son to prepare himself for Cambridge, he wrote the poem *Laodamia*, showing the evil result of undisciplined love. The lines of that poem which sum up its import—

The gods approve  
 The depth and not the tumult of the soul—

present the temper of mind in approval of which both poets are at one. Dido's love, however sympathetically he may paint it, is disapproved by Virgil because it is overmastering and intemperate, just as Turnus, though in the twelfth book of the *Æneid* the poet makes us feel with and for him, is disapproved for his uncontrolled frenzy. Both Dido and Turnus are foils to the disciplined and majestic calm of Aeneas—Ρωμαῖος καὶ ἀρρεν— as Marcus Aurelius, a kindred spirit to Virgil, phrased his ideal of manhood.

A significant pendant to the contrasting pictures of happy and unhappy love which I have quoted is the contrast between Wordsworth's Happy Warrior and the devoted and solitary figure of Virgil's hero. The one, facing "some awful moment to which Heaven has joined great issues, is happy as a lover and attired with brightness as a man inspired". He has regained, on a higher plane, the calm unclouded vision of Achilles. The other, knowing vaguely that his course and destiny are in Heaven's hands and that "fate suffers him not to lead his life by his own auspices", is "perplexed i' the extreme", and "thinks of many things". When the awful moment comes, he does indeed prove equal to the need, but at terrible cost to himself and to Dido. He hovers suspended between two worlds: the forthright simplicity of the epic chieftain for whom life holds no problems—εἰς οἰωνὸς ἀπιστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης—and the troubled sensitiveness of modernity, in which the one half of the world knows all too well how the other half lives and feels.



Æneas is not the ideal of the modern world; and so much the worse for the modern world. The man who lives only, save for one brief spell of forgetfulness, to do God's will, who is, as Æneas says of himself, "called for by Olympus", can scarce meet with approval from those who live only to do their own wills—to express, as the phrase runs, "their own personality". An age in which the individual withers is also the age in which the individual is protestingly and pathetically self-assertive. The more the herd-instinct rules, the more vehemently does the unit insist that he is a rule to himself. Æneas has at least this advantage over his modern critics, that he recognizes, however dimly and waveringly, an external objective moral sanction.

For Wordsworth the sense of duty comes to take the place of "the genial sense of youth". The emotions of childhood "recollected in tranquillity" become sublimated into an inspiration that keeps him joyous and trustful, warding from him "the set grey life and apathetic end". But to Æneas the consciousness of duty done brings no such mystical joy; duty wears no smile upon her face for him, nor do "flowers laugh before him in their beds". As there had been no passion, but only the danger of it ("desine meque tuis incendere teque querellis") in his relation with Dido, so he is passionless in the pursuit of his divine mission. Here again, by suggestion and implication, Virgil foreshadows Christian truth, the truth that only by losing his soul ("suppressing his ego" in the contemporary jargon) shall a man save it.

But if we would seek for the ideal of perfect womanhood conceived by either poet, we find it, on the side of Virgil, in the radiant maidenhood of Camilla, and in Wordsworth's sketch—"Three years she grew in sun and shower"—of perfect woman nobly planed. And between these two—the dream of the poet nicknamed Parthenias, than whom among his circle there was "no whiter soul", and that of the poet whose early lapse drove him for a while into a virginal revolt from carnality—there is a strange concord. Camilla, dedicated by her father to Diana's service, sharing with him an outlaw's life in the woods, fleeting light-foot over the meadow grasses, cherishing "an everlasting passion for the spear and for virginity", drawing the long lingering gaze of youths and matrons, and in the end wounded to the death for Italy—there is in this picture what might be described as the false dawn of mediaeval chivalry. And as Diana had watched over the growth of her neophyte from babyhood, so Wordsworth imagines Nature rearing to glorious womanhood the maiden of her choice:

The stars of midnight shall be dear  
To her; and she shall lean her ear

In many a secret place  
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,  
And beauty born of murmuring sound  
Shall pass into her face.

Virgil had in youth discarded rhetoric for philosophy, with permission to poetry to "revisit his sheets shyly and rarely". He probably, like Tennyson, always held in view the ambition to be not merely the author of a national epic but an interpreter of life to his fellow-men. If Servius is to be believed, he intended, after revising the *Æneid*, to devote himself altogether to philosophy. Had Virgil lived to the normal span, he might have given to the world a more objective *Prelude*. Wordsworth on the other hand was always a philosopher, in the sense that he aimed throughout at providing in his poetry a pattern for living. And in no respect is the juxtaposition of the poets more fruitful than in the fact that the loftiest flight of each treats of the origin and destiny of the human soul: the sixth book of the *Æneid* and the Immortality Ode.

There is this marked difference: in Virgil's eschatology sin and purgatory are prominent; in Wordsworth's poem there is no hint of sin—except, vaguely, in "shades of the prison-house"—or of the doctrine of the Fall. Virgil's life coincided with a current sense of failure in human society, a "loss of nerve", when expiatory cults from the East were finding a favourable breeding-ground in the West; Wordsworth lived in an age when Christian fervour, except in the limited circle affected by the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield, was at a low ebb, and when ideas of perfectibility and the millennium were widely current. The wave of optimism, of which Mill and Macaulay were to ride the crest, was already gathering and mounting. Virgil's insistence on sin and the need for purgation may be in part traced to a quite sincere desire to co-operate with Augustus in a revival of *religio* in the strict Latin sense, a feeling of uneasiness for things done and things left undone:

quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas; tot bella per orbem,  
tam multae scelerum facies; non ullus aratro  
dignus honos.

A rough and ready division of poets might be drawn between those "for whom the visible world exists", and exists with all the poignancy conferred upon it by a poet's sensibility—Homer, Sappho, Catullus, Burns, A. E. Housman; and those for whom the world is but a dream (albeit a very vivid one) and a symbol—Plato (in virtue of the Myths the father of them all), Dante, Shelley, Shakespeare and Keats stand with one foot firmly planted among

the former, and the other tentatively groping for a hold among the latter. Where do Virgil and Wordsworth stand?

Wordsworth we may unhesitatingly place among the poets of dream and symbol. He speaks of times

When the light of sense  
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed  
The invisible world,

of his youthful days when he was aware of

gleams like the flashing of a shield,

and when

the earth  
And common face of Nature spake to me  
Rememberable things.

"How," he asks,

How shall I seek the origin? where find  
Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?  
Oft in those moments such a holy calm  
Would overspread my soul that bodily eyes  
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw  
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,  
A prospect in the mind.

He answers this question by saying that he derived from the contemplation of the world a vision of the Divine behind phenomena, the invisible reality hidden behind the appearance of things:

I was only then  
Contented, when with bliss ineffable  
I felt the sentiment of Being spread  
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still,  
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought  
And human knowledge, to the human eye  
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart.

But all this testimony, it is important to note, is firstly personal testimony of a personal and unique experience; and secondly, it is all cast in the past tense; it is emotion recollected in a tranquillity which is the tranquillity of death; the vision is no longer there, though still a memory:

Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;  
'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;  
And night approaches with her shades.

We must be guarded in searching for mystical tendencies in poetry before Christianity, though, with Plato before us, nothing is impossible. Ancient civilization, with the world a blank sheet awaiting inscription, was absorbed in externalities; humanity had to build itself a physical dwelling before it could reflect on metaphysics. But there are features in the known facts of Virgil's life, apart from his poetry, which predispose and prepare us to find in the poetry hints at least of the mystical attitude to life. There is the fastidious shrinking from moral taint which won him the name of Parthenias, and there is his renunciation, in spite of strong pressure, of the life of the city and the court; there is also, as we have seen, his rejection of the rhetoric of the schools and his decision to embrace philosophy. Passing to the poems, we have in the Georgics his abhorrence of the social round of the city, his glorification of the divine country, and his asseveration that happiness is to be found only in labour and worship among living things of wood and field. Not that these in themselves spell mysticism; they are to be found in Tibullus, in Marlow, in Gray, and in many others whom it would be absurd to call mystics. But the *Aeneid* will reinforce our predisposition, though only perhaps by suggestion and implication. In long passages, even through whole books, we shall search unrewarded. Throughout most of the later books Virgil is enmeshed in the traditional epic machinery of battle; he did not relish it, and his disrelish is made clear from the machine-made quality of much of the verse. But even in these passages where Virgil writes almost mechanically he will suddenly wake up to the unreality of his sanguinary dream. Such a flash is the cry "*dis aliter visum*", on the violent death of one renowned for righteousness, a comment which impugns not divine justice but human standards of that wherein justice consists; spiritual excellence is not paid in temporal currency. Caieta, the nurse of Aeneas, wins the glory of giving her name to the map of Italy, "*si qua est ea gloria*"—if anything so transient as human nomenclature can confer glory. "*Rhaebe, diu,*" says Mezentius to his horse, "*res si qua diu mortalibus esset, viximus*": we have lived long, if there were (and the tense implies that there is not) any "long" in human things. Mezentius is speaking cynically as *contemptor divom*; but to Virgil the words would have carried a different sense: *sub specie aeternitatis* there is neither length nor shortness of time:

In the eyes of the gods

War-laden galleys, and armies on white roads,  
And unforgotten names, and the cold stars  
That have built all, are dust on a moth's wing.

This "questioning of sense and outward things" is evidence that Virgil was prepared no more than Wordsworth to accept the

world at the world's face value. To Virgil the world was divine and even the teeming city was *rerum pulcherrima*—Earth had not anything to show more fair. To Wordsworth it was "the glory and the freshness of a dream"—a dream that had passed away, but to which the soul could in a moment travel back. And the key to the world was Joy, by the power of which the poet could see to the heart of things.

Both Virgil and Wordsworth had fallen, as we have fallen, upon "a wintry clime":

this iron time

Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears—

but they did not tamely take the print of their age. Their world was no waste land of rats and bones and rocky wildernesses; it was indeed a world of struggle, but of hope and joy, because it was a world where one could always be in love. They are indomitable champions of the cause of life. They are a perpetual fount of refreshment to the purest emotions—love, joy, pity, admiration, hope. The destiny of their work has been and will be, as Wordsworth prophesied of his own work, "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think and to feel". To see, to think, and to feel rightly is to live abundantly; and to live abundantly is to win the only success worth the winning.

NEVILLE WATTS.

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## THE TRUE BACKGROUND OF THE *DIVINA COMMEDIA*

By ROBERT JOHN

**W**HEN I began to study Dante I was mainly concerned with the philological and literary aspect of his works; I was influenced by Father Mandonnet's *Dante le theologien*, published in Paris in 1935. This study suggested a new aspect, though its theses seemed indefensible in some decisive points. I was always aware, however, that in the true background of Dante's work is a mystery; this I felt urged to penetrate. All the students of Dante have felt puzzled

by obscure passages, symbols or characters which emerge in his works and defy all philological skill. These enigmas have been treated often too simply though there are very many of them, as Alexandre Masseron has shown.\* But together they constitute, as I discovered, a pattern which offers the key to the intimate inner rooms, as it were, of the *Divina Commedia*.

In his *Annals*, published in Paris in 1641, Bishop Henry Spondé of Pamiers suggested that Dante was a favourer and advocate of the Knights of the Temple. This opinion was recently once more expressed by Luigi Valli,† but he failed to follow it up and to scrutinize it. When I set out on my research work, I worked upon the assumption that the supposition of Bishop Spondé was true. I began to study the colourful history of the Order of the Templars and its tragic lawsuit that ended with its abolition in 1312. I felt strongly, if Bishop Spondé was right at all, that there ought to be reflections of this event in Dante's writings (besides *Purgatorio* 20, 91-93), and above all in the *Divina Commedia*.

What I found, however, was not merely some reflections but, indeed, the startling fact that the *Divina Commedia* rests upon a purely Templar eudaemonist doctrine. The architecture, the spiritual structure, the number and the grouping of the characters in the supernatural world, the whole of the magic atmosphere of this world-poem and its ultimate meaning—by Dante himself defined as "*ad opus*" i.e. for effectiveness‡—represents pure Templarism.

It is of course impossible to survey in an article the contents of my study as they are laid down in detail in the twenty-eight chapters of my book. Here are only essential points:

The Templars were a French Order of Knights who had received their *Regula* from St. Bernard de Clairvaux in 1128 and had their mother house on the great Temple Square in Jerusalem. It stood near to what is called today Haram-ash-Sherif, close to the El-Alsa Mosque. There were many associations and societies affiliated to the Order after 1135 in which laymen gathered who sympathized with the ideas of the Order. They were as exclusive as the Knights Order itself. Many of their members were artists and writers. In these circles, which would nowadays be labelled "highbrow", a peculiar kind of Gnosticism developed, a sort of "Aufklärung". Odd theories about the Church and the Imperium were circulated. These doctrines, however, were kept strictly secret; partly because these intellectual Templars (a third Order of the Templars as it were) regarded themselves with all their secrecy

\* Alexandre Masseron, *Les enigmes de la Divine Comédie*. Paris, 1922.

† Luigi Valli: *Il linguaggio segreto di Dante e dei Fedeli d'Amore*. Rome, 1928.

‡ In his letter to Cani Grandi de la Scala,



as the heirs and successors of the ancient Eleusinian mystery cults, and still more because the eyes of the Inquisition were vigilant. The rites of this Gnosticism came from the Middle East, and nobody was of course more conversant with oriental life than the Templars. They had their source above all in that Persian-Arabic school of poetry called "Sufism", founded by those dervishes called "Sufi" (wool coat wearer) whose lyricism was a pantheistic exaltation that found expression in artistic heights unparalleled in Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. *Donna Rosa* that central figure of daydreaming exaltation at the poetical court of Frederick II in Palermo and all those *Donnas* of the Tuscan *Dolce Stil Nuovo*, whose pre-eminent star was Dante himself, are only one single *Donna*: the personified Gnostic ideal of the Templars. The most famous of all these ethereal female characters is Dante's Beatrice, the incarnation of Templar Gnosticism. (I do not wish to deny the historical existence of Beatrice Pertinari, who married de Bardi and died very young.) From his early youth this Gnosticism was the "Mistress of his spirit"; he was still almost a boy when he was initiated—perhaps by Brunetto Latini, Beatrice always remained the mistress of his spirit without, however, providing reasons for jealousy on the part of his wife, Gemma. When Beatrice died (all those *Donnas* used to die very early though never too early not to reach the most miraculous symbolic dates of their death) the poet was mainly concerned with the poetic representation of the Neo-Platonic *Mors Philosophorum*, that Plotinian ecstasy which played such an outstanding rôle in Neo-Platonism. There can be no longer any doubt that all the members of those associations were only incidentally Thomists but primarily Neo-Platonists.

If we try to follow the traces of the Templars in the trend of events in the *Divina Commedia* we shall find surprising evidence for our thesis. Dante has lost his way—not so much as an individual, but as the representative of mankind to which God has set (according to the *de Monarchia*) two aims—earthly and heavenly happiness. The one cannot be detached from the other. Their symbols are the terrestrial and the heavenly *Paradiso*. This trend of thought is the necessary prerequisite for understanding the symbolism of the *Paradiso Terrestre*—that plateau on the Mount Purgatorio—and of the *Paradiso Celeste*, the Empyreum. Terrestrial happiness means to Dante the secured freedom of unfolding one's own personality culminating in the permanent universal peace of the "Monarchia". Heavenly happiness, however, is to him as the theologian the vision of God face to face. Both these forms of happiness are inseparably connected. For the majority of men if the earthly one is lacking, the supernatural will likewise fail.

To Dante, the Florentine, it was above all the policy of the Curia

which was the main obstruction to the *Pax Universalis*. Its roots were to be found in that "Constantine Donation" which the Middle Ages still took as a historical fact. To Dante the true climax of this worldly policy, however, was the ambition of Pope Boniface VIII Caetani, who strove to transform Tuscany into a kingdom for his family.

Dante's tight woods of confusion are representative of mankind stained with original sin, but at the same time to the Florentine they meant the worst incarnation of this sinfulness, the municipal policy of Florence. The wolf-bitch of lust debars him from ascending the Hill of Salvation which is the spring of all happiness. This hill is the Moria Hill of Jerusalem, on top of which the place of the Temple is to be seen still today; the Vale of Confusion is the Kedron valley through which the scapegoat was driven out into the desert of Juda on the Day of Atonement and the whole scene is depicted exactly according to the first verses of the second chapter of Isaïas. The short and steep path leading through the Golden Gate to the place of the Temple is obstructed by the wolf; but Virgil, the initiated of Eleusis, the prophet of the Imperium and of the Ecclesia, guides him through the *Inferno* and across the *Mount Purgatori* to the *Paradiso Terrestre*, the Temple Square on the other half of the earth. This mountain of the *Purgatorio* is exactly antipodal to Jerusalem. This was generally known. But what had escaped general attention is the fact that this *Paradiso Terrestre* is the exact topographical counterpart of the Haram-ash-Sherif. This accuracy goes so far that the very point at which Beatrice's chariot stops corresponds exactly to the point where the mother church of the Templar Order stands. Beatrice, at the same time, makes her appearance as the allegory of the Joachimite *Ecclesia Spiritualis* and in this capacity she accuses Dante—that is to say Christian mankind—of having deviated from the path of the poor, pure and non-political, original, Church.

We now understand why Beatrice is welcomed with King Solomon's song "Veni Sponsa de Libano". Solomon, the builder of the Temple hails as it were Beatrice, the wisdom of the Templars, on his very own soil, since the church of the Templars was called in the Middle Ages *Templum Salomonis*. We understand now why Solomon has to play such an outstanding role in the *Paradiso* and why that prophet Nathan, who had written no sacred book and appears oddly enough in this Christian theological environment emerges obviously as the opposite number of Solomon. Though Nathan was not the author of a sacred book, yet he was the prophet of the edification of the Temple.

We understand now why Pope Clemens V is condemned to hell six times in the *Divina Commedia* and why Beatrice's last words to

her faithful lover form the sixth (prophetic) condemnation of this Pope; it was he who abolished the Order of the Templars in 1312. This explains why Beatrice in her prophecy in the *Paradiso Terrestre* calls the great restorer of the world-order the DXV, the five hundred and fifteen\*: this 515 means in reality the new Zorobabel who was to re-erect the Temple—the world-order—as the first Zorobabel had erected it in 515 B.C. We understand at the same time how nonsensical it was when this enigmatic DXV was interpreted in a rather casual way simply by reading DVX instead of DXV, a misinterpretation which was to lead later in Rome to a Duce and subsequently in Berlin to a Führer.

We understand finally why Dante's last guide through the lofty heights of Heavens is St. Bernard. This is not for the sake of the motive of changing guides such as we meet in the famous poem "Anti-claudianus" of the Cistercian monk and poet *Alanus ab Insulis*. It is in fact the clear declaration that Dante, the Templar, submits to the guidance of the spiritual father of his Order by entering the heavenly realm.

Very much had to be omitted here that cannot be mentioned in the narrow framework of an article; for instance the ingenious manner in which Dante protests against the Council of Vienne in which the Order of the Templars was abolished. Small wonder that this council was contested and regarded as void by the Templars, as was the case also in England, testified by the chronicle of Walter of Heminburgh.

## HOW STRONG IS THIS NEW POLITICAL CATHOLICISM?

By MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE

**M**ANY people have remarked on the paradox of the rapid growth of the Church's international influence and prestige during an era when general faith in Christianity has rapidly decreased, with a consequent loss of spiritual and moral authority

\* Purgat. Canto XXXIII., V, 43.

in the world. But the explanation is obvious enough. When Christian values were generally accepted as the moral basis of social behaviour, the Church (or perhaps I should say the various Christian communions) was taken for granted and treated on its merits. It might be attacked in some quarters and praised in others, but it was just part of the landscape. And this fact had its influence on the Church itself, for many of its members, including many of its more responsible ones, did not always bother to set the best of examples or to distinguish between their ecclesiastical role and their worldly status. And the first stage of the revolt against the Church's supernaturally-based claims did not greatly alter the situation, for it was the general view that spiritual and moral standards were raised rather than lowered by humanist progress. The decline of the Church was confidently prophesied and the prospect of the loss caused no great anxiety.

✓ However, matters did not turn out as expected. The Faith was indeed widely lost and, once lost, not easily recovered, but the substitute, faith in materialistic progress, after its first big bound—a bound, by the way, of which the spring was the as yet unspent Christian moral heritage—hesitated, wobbled, halted and finally got stuck, knee, waist, neck, head deep in the quagmire of contending nationalisms and social ideologies. And the Church's visible progress in our times has been contemporaneous with this unedifying and lamentable spectacle. It has been so for two main reasons. First, the Church itself became increasingly aware of its heightened responsibilities in a world which had thrown overboard its moral compass. For example, it turned its attention with a new earnestness to the social and political implications of its doctrines, a matter that had been largely lost sight of during the centuries when to the world it was just part of the accepted landscape. At the same time a large number of reforms, both in the spiritual and cultural fields, enabled its members, and especially its clergy, to play worthy parts in the rising battle between the Christian values and the post-Christian ones. The second reason was that the world itself began to appreciate the fact that the Church, whatever view one might take of its claims and credentials, did stand out as a challenge to the new order—in other words that it could no longer be taken for granted. And, as time went on, the Church has come to be regarded not only as a challenge in the sense of presenting something to be fought in order to complete the Pyrrhic victory of secularism, but as a challenge in the sense of offering an example and a teaching that in certain respects at least appears increasingly attractive to those who are realizing by their experience the fruits of the new order. To many of these the problem is not now to defeat the Church, but how to separate the many attractive Christian values from a dogmatic and

disciplinary setting which in the light of the general loss of Faith has become repellent to them or plainly impossible. And from the Christian point of view the problem is not only how to defeat a secularism that is rapidly defeating itself and mankind with it, but also (and in a greater degree) how to Christianize the perplexed and doubting good will of the disillusioned.

All this, I think, roughly indicates the position we have reached in the post-war world, though I have described the position somewhat optimistically in that I have concentrated on the spiritual and moral struggle as it presents itself to the more informed and the more wide-awake. Millions upon millions are of course committed, whether by conviction or force, to one of the extreme expressions of secularism or remain still more or less content with the liberal-socialist drift, characteristic of Anglo-Saxon democracy, though even to these the challenge of the Church in the first sense is being increasingly realized. Russia, for example, pays its greatest possible tribute by seeing the Church as public enemy number one, while Anglo-Saxons, though they try to close their ears especially when they do not relish what they would otherwise hear, are ready enough to expect a Papal judgement in their favour when they feel they have earned it. When such judgement is not forthcoming, they can be very resentful.

But the keener appreciation of the deeper forces at work is to be found, I think, on the Continent, which has startled the Anglo-Saxon world by producing a whole crop of powerful Catholic parties. The astonishing ignorance of those who pretend to expert knowledge of foreign affairs was shown when a B.B.C. speaker told the British public that the present association of Catholicism with democracy was something entirely novel and a consequence of the defeat of Fascism. In point of fact the specific association of the Church with political parties was from the first democratic or popular. We can, I think, fairly leave out of account the accident that the more or less absolute and reactionary regimes of France, Spain, Austria were to be found in Catholic countries, for the existing religion was not consciously attempting to influence politics, though it may have sought protection from the established order. It was only after the defeat of Napoleon that Catholicism consciously sought to make its political contribution. In France there were swings from what we should call Right to Centre and Centre-Left, but it was not until the excesses of the Republic played into the hands of the fake-Catholicism of Maurras and the Action Française that the fundamental democratic ideal was rejected in the Catholic name. Elsewhere in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain, the succession States of the old Austrian Empire, as absolutism weakened or anti-clericalism allowed, so did Catholic democratic

movements spring up in response to the spirit of the Catholic social teaching. The later association of Catholicism with Fascism or authoritarianism was always a violent reaction against the anti-clericalism, secularism and incompetence of Continental democracy. It is important that this truth should be established, otherwise the political philosophy of the Church is misjudged. On the other hand we must not go to the other extreme and assert that Catholicism *must* be democratic in spirit. The essential contribution which the Church has made to politics and which it continues to make is really very simple: it is insistence on the sovereignty of the moral law as recognized by natural reason and as permeating the Revelation of God to man, made in God's image. The Church absolutely rejects any human claim, whether it be made by tyrant, monarch or the so-called will of the people, to be above the moral law. And the Church's attitude towards any political regime is automatically governed by its practical judgement as to the conditions in which the sovereignty of the moral law is best safeguarded. It will side with democracy in reaction against any claim to divine right by kings or dictators; it will feel its way back towards what we call authoritarianism, where the latter recognizes a law more fundamental than that of any human will, when democracy is in practice equated with the sovereignty of a secularist or a-moral popular will.

Just before the war the position was very complex for Catholics, and it has been unduly simplified by those elements of the Church which found themselves able to take sides very definitely, whether on the side of Christian democracy or on the side of authoritarianism. We who lived in an Anglo-Saxon democratic system and benefited from the political genius of the race should remember that there was little comparison between the situation in which we found ourselves and that in which many Continental Catholics found themselves. For us there seemed to be no danger of democracy degenerating into the tyranny of an uncontrolled and unchecked popular will, nor was there any danger of the country becoming the victim of shady political careerists out solely for their own advantage. Instead of having to fight anti-clericalism, we profited from the strong public moral sense which, whatever we may say about English Protestantism, has long permeated the national conscience as a result of our religious history. All this provided us with a guarantee that politics in this country would always respect the essential basis of the moral law and human freedom. There could be no temptation for us to play with the idea that authoritarianism might be more in harmony with our spiritual outlook. And it is worth noting that in Britain and America no serious Catholic ever showed any sympathy with authoritarian tendencies so far as his own country was concerned, even though some may occasionally



have asked themselves whether a more vocational type of democracy might not be a useful line of reform. Those who were criticized as crypto-fascists were always thinking, not of their own country, but of Continental countries where conditions were very different. It is important to note this because it underlies once more the truth that instructed Catholics today always instinctively stand for democracy and criticize it only when in their view exceptional conditions make them fear that democracy is becoming a mockery of itself, endangering that moral law and human freedom for which the Christian must always stand.

But this was precisely the danger which faced many Catholics on the Continent, and they had to choose between two evils: the evil of political authority being concentrated in the hands of a leader whose behaviour could be openly observed, who could give and keep promises and who could repress manifestly anti-Catholic forces like Communism, Marxism, Freemasonry, etc.; and the evil of the hidden tyranny of a so-called popular will which was in effect the will of a coterie of political careerists, strongly anti-clerical in views, and able, through propaganda, blackmail and bribery, to count on the requisite democratic support. They had to remember also that democratic freedom must work to the advantage of Communism, which prided itself on its aim to uproot Christian values and on its belief that to play the political game fairly was a despicable weakness of bourgeois suckers. The choice was not easy, and its difficulty in the light of Catholic insistence that a regime is good or bad according to the fate under it of the moral law explains why so many Catholics found themselves able to accept with qualifications the Right dictatorships which sprang up. More thoughtful minorities of Catholics chose definitely to defend and expound through thick and thin the defence either of a moderate Christian authoritarianist philosophy as ultimately soundest since under it a moral order could be guaranteed, or of a Christian democracy which must in the long run win through and safeguard essential human liberty. Both parties accused each other of compromising with evil. The Right Catholics said that the Left tolerated manifestly anti-Christian and anti-clerical forces for the sake of a mere theory. The Left Catholics said that no mere immediate advantage could justify putting Christianity at the mercy of absolutism.

As always in these political debates a large number of extraneous factors determined the success and failure of the rivals and, as we know, in the end the trial by force smashed the Right everywhere in Europe save in the Iberian peninsula. As a consequence it has been established that those Catholics who were prepared to defend Right totalitarianism as existing in Germany and even

in Italy were in the wrong. What we now know about Nazism at least makes it clear that the Church was marked down as an enemy to be destroyed according to schedule. Indeed it is certain that there must always be an irreconcilable opposition between the Church which teaches God's moral law and any dictatorship which presumes to teach and enforce a new moral law of its own. To pretend otherwise in the hope of obtaining any temporal advantage is to court disaster. In maintaining this the Catholic democrats were in the right. But we cannot jump from this to the conclusion that the way is now cleared for a Catholic democratic advance for the future.

Let us see what has been happening in recent months.

Partly because of the lesson learnt and partly because of a virtual boycott of any movement compromised by its past association with what is currently called Fascism, the Catholic parties have blossomed forth with enormously increased strength and often with a programme which in political and social questions sails as near to socialism as possible. The new movement is most typical in France. There the small but strongly led Christian democratic forces have benefited in a number of ways. The debacle ruined what reputation was left to the old regime. After the armistice a genuine attempt was made under Petain to restore France's spiritual morale, and religious influence was notably strengthened. That in its turn was destroyed. But the Christian Democrats have profited from both defeats, for they have been the inevitable focus of the spiritual and moral revival, and, being uncompromised themselves, they have been enabled to direct it on the democratic-socialist road which today is fashionable. In Italy and Germany conditions of the military defeat of Fascism and Nazism have dictated the rallying of the strong Catholic forces to the only uncompromised Catholic line, namely Christian Democracy under leaders persecuted by the former regimes. In Belgium and Holland a stronger continuity with the happier past has enabled the Catholics to stand nearer to the centre, but the operation of similar forces has affected them, too, and the parties have changed their names and to some extent their policies. In Belgium the criticism is made that the Catholics are far too Conservative. In the East of Europe, as we know, conditions of Soviet occupation have either prevented the development of genuine Catholic parties or denied them any real freedom. But there are quite sufficient indications that if these countries were free, strong Christian democratic parties would be playing an even more important role than in the West. Only in the Czech lands of Czechoslovakia is there honest evidence of a partial Catholic conversion to the anti-Christian side.

In Europe today, then, we may say that there are five fairly

clearly defined political groups. Reading from political Left to political Right there are the Communists, the Socialists, the Liberals, the Catholics and what we may call the Unreconciled. The Communists we know all about, and I need not dwell on them for the moment. The Socialists and Liberals cover between them the old *secularist* forces from Right to Left who have accepted the new order so that towards the Right end they must not be confused with the Unreconciled and yet, towards the Left, are opposed to Communism. The Catholics cover from Right to Left much the same types of people, but they are united by the conviction of the primacy and necessity of the spiritual and moral order, preserved and taught by Catholicism, as against a secularism which broke down before the attack of Fascism and which must break down again before the onslaught of Communism. By the Unreconciled I mean the unknown quantity of people who, I believe, are now for the most part convinced of the folly and wrongness of Nazism and Fascism, as they are probably convinced of the impracticability of a more moderate Authoritarianism, but who believe in their hearts that there can be no good future in the present appeasement of the Left forces which have already accepted an unprecedented number of cruel injustices to men and to nations, and which set up nothing positive as against the threat of Russia and its Communist agents. I think that the failure to recognize the existence of these Unreconciled who probably swell the numbers of the Catholics and the Liberals is one of the most dangerous points in the European situation today. For the number of the Unreconciled is not to be judged by counting heads, if that could be done: it is more like a potential force in that the feeling of non-reconciliation is today part of, rather than the whole of, the consciousness of millions who have for the present to make the best of the established order. Obviously it must represent an immensely strong potential force from the Baltic States through Poland and Germany down through Central Europe into the Balkans and Italy. It is openly represented in Spain, where a Catholic authoritarianism persists thanks largely to its enemies' stupidity, and, perhaps in a less marked degree in Portugal. Can we believe that in the face of the injustices perpetrated in more than half Europe in the name of the Atlantic Charter and under the growing threat of Soviet Communism there is not a great deal of non-reconciliation in the still free countries of Europe?

And here perhaps we get the most suggestive clue to the future of Europe and to the situation in which the lines of future Church policy will be directed. For it provides the lines of a moral demarcation in the new world.

The battle between Christianity and secularism to which

reference was made at the beginning of this paper is narrowing, as I see it, to two immediate and overwhelmingly important issues. The first is obvious: the threat of Communism. The second is the injustice of the post-war settlement, very largely under the influence of the appeasement of Soviet Russia. Here again we in this country are in a privileged and relatively sheltered position, and we find it difficult to take a realist view of the situation, but our privileges and our shelters are weakening very fast, and it may in the end prove as necessary for us as for others to understand what is happening and to be prepared.

The great question is this: Can the democratic supporters of secularism, now represented roughly by the Socialists and Liberals on the Continent, stand up against the Communist threat (which is, after all, another version of the Nazi-Fascist threat, though it presents its temptations to the political Left and the anti-Christians rather than to the Right and the Christians), and has it the strength to deal with the aftermath of a settlement even more inhuman and unjust than Versailles ever was or could ever be made to appear? Alternatively can the new political Catholicism?

I for one am convinced that democratic secularism is impotent. Democratic secularism (or if we prefer the more common term in this country, Liberalism) had its supreme test after the last war, and its failure is written in the disasters of subsequent history. Already greatly weakened by the Marxist revelation that it had failed to carry its ideals into the economic field and beginning to show clearly the defects consequent on its lack of any positive spiritual creed which could give a substance and sanction to its ideals (how many Liberals ever seriously intended to apply their ideals to the native colonial races on whose toil the economic basis of their idealism depended?) secularism proved unable to defeat the spirit of nationalism and power-politics after the last war. Since then it has been fighting a rapidly losing battle, and has only been able to survive as a really significant force in alliance with Marxism under the name of democratic socialism. And today even this mixture looks like yielding on the Continent to Communism on the one side and, possibly, to Catholicism on the other.

What of the Catholic parties? When one considers the enormous advance which political Catholicism has made through the war there seems to be reason to hope that the wheel is coming full circle, and that after the long period of the eclipse of Christendom since the Renaissance and Reformation we are unexpectedly approaching an era that may be compared with the days when the Catholic faith was the most important factor in secular politics. In my view any such hopes will prove most deceptive, at any rate in so far as they are founded on the growth of the Catholic democratic parties.

In any case a Catholic political party is a difficult conception in the modern world where religion still divides, rather than unite, men. Though it may well be contended that we shall see more and more men, in their reaction against the threat of Russian Communism and their despair of finding any safe anchorage in secularism, looking for some kind of Christian moral leadership, there will long remain a great gap between such a state of mind and any general recovery of the Catholic faith. And even allowing for the fact that the Catholic parties are not so much religious parties as broad Christian parties to which any broad Christian can in conscience adhere, it seems to me doubtful whether they can command and continue to command the political allegiance of the millions of disillusioned who are none the less more or less faithless so far as religion, strictly so called, is concerned. Or we may put it another way. If they become broad enough to command that allegiance, will they be able to give a leadership sufficiently positive for the task in hand? Will they not in practice become hard to distinguish from secularism?

And this thought leads one to what appears to me the real cause why the Catholic parties will prove unequal to the task that has to be grappled if Europe is to survive. These parties, I suggest, are already too far compromised. Their rapid development has been due to the transitory conditions of the last stages of the war and the immediate post-war situation. While deeply sincere in their resistance against Nazism and Fascism—a resistance which, as we have seen, springs from the side they rightly took in the pre-war differences between Catholics on the Continent, the condition of their development has bound them to the policy of appeasement at the cost of past pledges and elementary justice which the Big Powers have adopted in deference to Soviet Russia. I, for one, find it very hard indeed to give the name of Christian to a party which has had nothing whatever to say in protest against the deal meted out to Poland or Yugoslavia. And, allowing for inevitable political compromises, is the foreign policy of General de Gaulle or even M. Bidault as Christian in spirit as that of M. Blum? Nor does it seem to me to be truly consistent with the ideal of Christian understanding and freedom to deal with the defeated, whether at home or abroad, by a policy of trial, purging and punishment. Carried out to the present extent at least, it is a destructive and in no way a Christianly constructive policy. It is worth contrasting the spirit of Catholic parties with the idealism of a Mr. Gollancz. Again, it is doubtful whether the commitment to radical social and economic reform along a scarcely modified socialist pattern will prove tenable. As for Catholic parties in the defeated countries, these are inevitably branded by their subservience, as a condition of survival, to the



directions of the victors. In other words these parties are unlikely ever to be in a position to command the real loyalties of the people and the forces that I have called the Unreconciled. And I repeat that in regard to these I am not thinking of those who are simply waiting for the day of revenge or for a neo-Fascism, but of those who, either for moral reasons or because they have been the unjust victims of present policy, whether in the form of the betrayal of their countries or in the form of the political ostracism of their political views, look for an alternative to the present settlement.

A word perhaps should be said about the Catholic position in America, for it is a widely held view that the Vatican looks more and more to the growing and wealthy Catholic community of the United States as the real counterweight to Communism and secularism in Europe and Asia. Catholicism in America has undoubtedly one great advantage: it is reconciled to, and an important factor in, the greatest democratic Power in the world today and the one alone capable of standing up to Russia. Catholicism in America has shed a great many of the traditions and, if you will, archaisms which make so many people feel that the Church is a relic of the past and not adapted to conditions of the future. But Catholicism in America, I suggest, has paid for this by becoming very American. If it has shed certain external archaisms, it is also naive and relatively uneducated, as is evident if one compares its theological and cultural output as compared, for example, with France or Germany. But the most serious defect from the point of view of this paper is the way it is committed to the American political and economic point of view, and I for one cannot feel that Catholic America shares very much of the deep supra-national outlook which has characterized the Italianized Vatican in the last half century or more.

Like the political parties of Europe (though in a smaller degree because it is in itself non-political) American Catholicism is too compromised by nationalism and native views and too unaware of the revolutionary character of Catholic spiritual doctrine in its application to nations, as well as individuals, to be the focus of any great Christian renaissance. It is odd that the American Catholic temptation is isolationism—for isolationism is certainly not the Christian answer to American secularist power politics.

One has, I suggest, but to compare the spirit and tone of the political pronouncements of the Pope throughout his reign with the working views of Anglo-Saxon Catholics or with the record of the Catholic political parties to realize how much of the appeal of Christianity is missing from them.

Perhaps it will be objected that it is inconsistent to criticize Catholic parties for their dividing Catholic label and then to appeal



to the leadership of the Pope. The answer is that there is a great difference between the wholly spiritual leadership of the Pope and any attempt made by any political party, however sincere, to pursue temporal ends so far as feasible in conformity with the teaching of Christianity. One imagines it to be the other way round. One imagines that non-Catholics would find it easier to follow a Catholic lead adapted to the political and social ends of any one country or party. But it is not so. As the Catholic ideal is narrowed down so does the Catholic label or leadership loom the larger to become the less excusable and the more resented. It will never be English Catholicism or French Catholicism or socialist Catholicism or tory Catholicism which will inspire the world to Christian principles and set them again on the road to the Church. Only one thing will do that, and that is the Faith at its fullest and purest, the Faith which today is preached and exemplified by the Holy Father. Where the spiritual fullness of the Faith is made manifest and where it is fearlessly applied to the temporal problems of the world above the interests of nations and class, there will be found the inspiration that can bring men back to God. This is not to say that men will be prepared to accept it in its fullness. But what they see and what they can accept will be the genuine article. When the Pope teaches charity towards our enemies or the immorality of turning the human being into a robot of the State, he is teaching genuine Christianity, springing directly from the reality of Christ's mystical body. Men, if they listen at all and have good will, will be impressed by the supra-national sweep and the supernatural quality of the teaching, even though from another angle it is only commonsense. This is infinitely more impressive, infinitely more Christian, than any detailed political or social reforms of a body calling itself Catholic but in fact necessarily deeply affected by the very nationalistic and class prejudices, as well as inevitable political compromises, which Christianity should be overcoming.

That is why it seems to me that the future depends on the quality of the Church as the Church, led and taught by the Pope, articulated, as it were, through the world by the bishops and clergy and laity, and lived by the cells of Christ's body. Evidence of a single Catholic experiencing and seeking to overcome the inevitable tension between the spirit of God and the spirit of the world is worth far more as a Christian witness than evidence of any Catholic party or nation compromising right and left in order to survive and gain more power. This is not of course to suggest any return to the fatal dualism which marked the post-Reformation era when the Church went into spiritual retreat and left the world to its own devices. The Church's witness today must be in the world. It must continually be concerned with the business of the world, for it is over

that business that the great struggle is waged. But Caesar's job remains Caesar's job, and what we have to strive for is to convert Caesar—convert him fully or convert him partially—not to replace him with a half-spiritual, half-temporal mongrel.

Thus, looking at the world today, I see far greater cause for rejoicing in the Holy Father's creation of thirty-two new Cardinals, who will bring the Father closer to his children as it will draw the children nearer to the Father, than in any multiplication of Catholic parties or Catholic electoral successes at the polls. I see far greater cause for rejoicing in the spiritual and liturgical revival, say in France, as well as in the many examples of a revitalized Catholic action in that country, than in any M.R.P. electoral victory. Indeed until there has been a great Catholic revival, the victories of Catholic parties are in the long run almost a menace.

Today it is not the quantity of Catholics nor the noise they make which will matter: it is the quality of the Catholic witness, its spiritual worth tested by the fearlessness of its application to the world of its spiritual life. This is so for the Church itself (and the quantities and the noise will come soonest through the quality); but I believe that it is equally so for the world at large. Even that difficult problem of Christian unity will be soonest solved by the Church's own witness to the Truth, not only in its teaching, but in its life as lived by the members of Christ's mystical body.

There is room—who can deny it?—for much change and much progress within the government, administration, organization of the Church. Our arteries have hardened during the long and relatively static years of the post-Reformation period. Happily there are many signs of a renewal of spirit and vigour, and I for one hope and believe that the breakings with precedent which have occurred are only the first of many changes which, in God's providence, will yet enable the Church to bring disillusioned, threatened and persecuted man back to God's order.

MICHAEL DE LA BEDOYERE.

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## CONSCRIPTION AND CONSCIENCE

By HUMPHREY J. T. JOHNSON

IN the museum in Brussels which bears his name there hangs a picture of some children by the eccentric artist, Anton Joseph Wiertz of Dinant. It is gruesomely inscribed, "Food for the Cannon", and is a witness to the loathing of conscription, as enforced by Napoleon, among the generation which remembered it. "I can use up 25,000 men a month," said the Emperor to Metternich at Schönbrunn, and there are those who believe that the declining birth-rate of France, in the years which followed, was not unconnected with this callous remark. To provide food for the cannon seemed an inadequate recompense for the pains of child-bearing. It was the Convention which in August 1793 first had recourse to the *Levée en masse*. But the measure, making conscription an integral part of French institutions, was the work of the Directory. By this law, of which General Jourdan, the victor of Wattignies, was *rapporteur*, every Frenchman was declared to be a soldier by right and liable to service in time of peace up to the age of twenty-five and in war for an unlimited period. In thus creating a national army in place of the old royal army of France with its system of voluntary long-service recruitment, the First French Republic made boast of the claim that it was acting in the name of Democracy.

The public opinion of the world has, with but few exceptions, sanctioned recourse to war. There are said to be a few primitive peoples to whom it is unknown. The explorer, Ross, found great difficulty in explaining to the people of Baffin Land what a battle was, and some Asiatic jungle tribes, we are told, when threatened, do not fight, but run away.

On the other hand, by the most advanced races the pursuit of arms has been regarded as a nobler occupation than honest toil. Herodotus tells us that in the Greek states, no less than among barbarians, the professional soldier was honoured above others (ii, 167). According to Tacitus the German warrior, prototype of the mediaeval knight, looked down on the man who obtained by the sweat of his brow, what he might have secured by the shedding of blood—"pigrum quin immo et iners videtur sudore acquirere quod possis sanguine parare" (*Germania*, XIV). Nor must we forget to include among the Germans of Tacitus, the Anglo-Saxons, who turned Britain into England, the Franks, who changed Gaul into France, the Visigoths, whose descendants built the great Spanish Empire, and the Lombard townsmen who vanquished Barbarossa.

The theoretical liability of every able-bodied man to defend his city or follow his lord to battle found expression in the militias of Rome and of the Greek States, in the Anglo-Saxon "Fyrd" and the feudal levy in England. But with the introduction of firearms, military organizations of a more professional character came into being, till once more in modern times conscription has made a reality, the conception of "a nation in arms". This principle was applied with greatest efficiency in Prussia and bore fruit in the victories of 1866 and 1870. The older conception of universal military service has continued to be represented by the Swiss Federal Army, which has maintained the character of a militia. In practice the application of conscription throughout Europe was much mitigated by the large number of exemptions granted and the system of substitution so frequently made use of. The introduction of universal service by the French Revolutionary Government had been the signal for the great popular uprising in La Vendée; but its gradual application throughout Europe in the following century evoked but little opposition and rarely became so unpopular as to neutralize its advantages to the Governments which enforced it, whether because the majority of men are by nature slaves or because they are at heart lovers of war. Armed resistance to the application of conscription during this period was not unknown. In 1869 and again in 1881, the first time successfully, and the second, unsuccessfully, the Slavs of Southern Dalmatia rose against enrolment in the Austro-Hungarian Army. In general, however, the unwilling conscript will prefer to allow himself to be drafted into the army and then desert, should occasion arise, rather than face the penalties attendant on the alternative course.

An army is naturally weakened when it contains a high percentage of unwilling conscripts. The swift disasters which overtook the Turkish forces in Thrace and in Macedonia in 1912 were probably in part, at least, attributable to the fact that for the first time the armies of the Sultan included Christian elements, whose sympathies lay naturally with the Balkan Allies. For the party of the "Young Turks", on its accession to power, had imposed conscription on Christians who had previously paid a poll-tax in lieu of military service. The Austrian *débâcle* in Eastern Galicia two years later had, if not as its main cause, at least as a principal one, sympathy for the Russians on the part of the Slav conscripts in the Austro-Hungarian Army.

Most men are, and always have been, quite uninterested in the distinctions drawn by theologians and jurists between "just" and "unjust" wars. They have been, and are, content to fight for the political community to which they belong and disinclination to do this, if it has appeared on a considerable scale, has usually been

due to national or racial, rather than moral or religious, considerations. The sense of being a separate nation inspired the Irish opposition to the Military Service Act of 1918, and a strange case of racial opposition to conscription may be quoted from Bolivia, where a few years ago the Indians killed and ceremonially ate the white officers sent by the Government to conscript them. (Lothrop Stoddard. *Clashing Tides of Colour*, p. 88.) Opposition to military service on religious grounds has been primarily, though not exclusively, a phenomenon which has appeared in English-speaking countries, that is to say, such forms of it as are unconnected with belief in the transmigration of souls and an aversion to taking life in any form. The Reformation gave birth to sects which denied the lawfulness of bearing arms; the Anabaptists and Mennonites on the Continent, the Society of Friends in England. During the nineteenth century in both Germany and Russia their tenets brought the Mennonites into conflict with the governments, but in each case a *modus vivendi* was reached. In the former country it was arranged that they should perform non-combatant service in the army and in the latter that they should do work in the State Forestry Department. The Russian sect, known as the Doukhobors or "Spirit Wrestlers", itself, possibly founded by a Quaker, was not able to obtain such favourable terms. Its adherents were banished to the Caucasus for refusal to undertake military service, but found themselves in fresh difficulties when conscription was introduced into the Caucasian provinces by Alexander III. Ultimately, through the intervention of Tolstoy, a number of them were enabled to emigrate to Canada where they were received with the greatest enthusiasm; though later their peculiar tenets proved a source of friction with the Canadian Government. The influence of the Society of Friends has far exceeded its numerical strength. "It is a protest," says L. T. Hobhouse, "which has set the military spirit the task of justifying itself." (*Morals in Evolution* (1915), p. 267.) None of the larger Protestant bodies has officially adopted the doctrine of non-resistance, though many individual ministers and laymen have done so. The Methodist missionaries, who arrived in Fiji a century ago, preached non-resistance as a part of Christianity to the inhabitants.\* The doctrine was however later given up, when the Christian natives were molested by the non-Christian ones. The question of whether the principle of non-resistance, if put into practice on a very large scale, would achieve beneficial results must always remain an academic one. For the instinct in human nature to meet violence with violence is too strong to admit of such an experiment being made.

England, on account of her island position, and the United

\* G. C. Field, *Pacifism and Conscientious Objection*, p. 37.

States owing to its remoteness from Europe, did not at first enter into competition with the great continental powers in the matter of land armaments, though during the American Civil War conscription was adopted at the outset by the Confederacy and later by the Union. In New York the "Draft" met with such opposition that the city was for some days given up to serious rioting; but both in the North and in the South the effects of compulsory service were mitigated by exemptions and evasions.

The problem of the "conscientious objector" in its present form dates from the introduction of compulsory military service into Great Britain in 1916 and into America in the following year. Everyone in this country was prepared for statutory exemption from military service of members of the Society of Friends, a body towards whom a tradition of respect had long existed. But when a number of persons, belonging to all denominations and even to none, objected to performing military service, generally on the ground that all war was wrong, occasionally on the ground that the war in which they were being called on to serve was unjust, a feeling of bewilderment and exasperation arose. Society was indignant at finding its authority thus unexpectedly challenged, and persons of good social position regarded it as a disgrace to have a conscientious objector in their family. The number of Catholics among the objectors was very small, but notwithstanding that the Pope declared that the war was degenerating into "a useless massacre", there were some of their co-religionists who wished to see spiritual penalties set in motion against them. Many conscientious objectors were sent to prison; some were subjected to physical ill-treatment. But respect for the convictions of the individual was still strong in England, and Continental peoples were much surprised at the moderation which the Government on the whole displayed.

In America the law drew a distinction between "sincere" and "insincere" objectors to military service. The former were those who held that all war was wicked; the latter, those who believed that the particular war on which President Wilson and his Administration had embarked was unjustified. In practice it seems to have been difficult to effect a clear demarcation between the two.\* Conscientious objection to military service, evidently an importation from England, developed on a small scale in France between the two world wars, and on the eve of the second one a little group of Frenchmen (including a few Catholics) were in

\* In the recent war "absolutist" objectors who refused to register were judged "insincere" and imprisoned. "Sincere" objectors were permitted to render alternative service to the State, for which they received no pay. They had, in addition, to maintain themselves. The Religious Objectors included representatives of 115 different denominations.



prison for having refused to present themselves when their classes had been called to the colours. In view of the exaggerated patriotism to which all classes of Frenchmen are so prone, it is not surprising that the conscientious objector encountered extreme hostility in that country. Frenchmen might perhaps forgive one who, through fear, was reluctant to join the army, but one who alleged conscience as his motive was looked on as an enemy of society.\*

When conscription was reintroduced into England in 1939 a different atmosphere prevailed. There was no social ostracism of objectors as on the earlier occasion. The objector who in 1916 was regarded as a criminal appeared in 1939 to be no more than a harmless crank. Public opinion had grown accustomed to conscientious objection to military service, as it had got accustomed to Trade Unions, and fairly liberal provisions were made to meet it. The tribunals, moreover, seem to have made honest attempts to understand the point of view of those who appeared before them. "Political" objection, the equivalent of what was called in America "insincere" objection, was not recognized as a ground for exemption. But, as with "sincere" and "insincere" objection, it was in practice not easy to draw a hard and fast line between religious and political objection. A religious man, required by the State to take the life of his neighbour in a war for which he holds that there is insufficient justification, will say that, recognizing an intimate connection between religion and all departments of human life, his refusal to do so is based on religious grounds. The attempt to draw a rigid distinction between "political" and "religious" objection to military service can only have been made by those who recognize no connection between religion and politics or hold that the precepts of the Decalogue apply only to private life. Among those who appeared before the tribunals to claim exemption were representatives of practically every religious creed, as well as those who disclaimed all connexion with organized religion and made no use of religious arguments in putting forward their case. Judges had their knowledge of the religious physiognomy of England enlarged as they found themselves confronted by representatives of sects of whose very existence they had hitherto been in ignorance—the "Elohim", the "Four-Square Gospellers", the "Open Brethren", the "Pentecostal Brotherhood", the "Fellowship of Reconciliation" and the "Order of the Cross", this last being a vegetarian sect at Romford in Essex. The objectors naturally included a not inconsiderable proportion of fanatics and many persons of little education. "We had applicants at the Tribunal," says Professor Field (*ibid.*, p. 5), "who stated that they never knew that the Bible

\* Pierre Milhaud, *France*, p. 45.

was not originally written in English." He adds, however, that this was exceptional, and there is no doubt that the objectors included a fair proportion of highly intelligent persons; in fact it may be doubted whether, as a body, they were inferior in average intelligence to the rest of the nation.

The man who claims to be the recipient of a divine revelation, forbidding him to bear arms, occupies the most logically unassailable position. But for clearness of argumentation and theological precision the statements made by the Catholic objectors probably ranked first. The present writer, on reading some of them, was much impressed by the conscientiousness which their authors had shown in attempting to familiarize themselves with the teaching of the Church. The main part of their case naturally rested on the plea that the requisite theological conditions, required for a just war, were not present. Some, however, seemed to weaken their plea by appearing to deny the theoretical possibility that a "modern" war could be just, though they left one in doubt whether "modern" war began in 1914 or at an earlier period. Some Catholic pacifists took up an extreme position and considered service in ambulance units incompatible with their principles. An intelligent young man, belonging to a well-known Catholic family, in conversation with the writer, showed himself unwilling to draw a distinction between a soldier and a burglar. He saw no difference between a doctor, accompanying a soldier to the front, and a burglar, setting forth on his errand of mischief, with a medical attendant at his side.\*

The Catholic pacifist can certainly claim that the popes have been no admirers of conscription, as enforced by the great European powers. Pius IX, when pressed to introduce it into the States of the Church, refused to do so, through fear of helping to promote the moral evils, usually inseparable from prolonged periods of barrack life. Leo XIII in his Encyclical of 20 June, 1894, on the "Reunion of Christendom" was outspoken in his condemnation of the evils of conscription. "Inexperienced youths," he wrote, "are removed from parental direction and control to be thrown amidst the dangers of a soldier's life; robust young men are taken from agriculture or ennobling studies, or trade, or the arts to be put under arms." Benedict XV was no less emphatic. He saw no hope for Europe except in the abolition of conscription, which, as Cardinal Gasparri stated in his letter to Mr. Lloyd George, was looked on by the Holy See as the source of innumerable evils.

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\* The Catholic objectors in England enjoyed no official status; but in America there was an "Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors" represented on the National Service Board of Religious Objectors, which negotiated with the Selective Service Administration.

It would seem, however, as though the abhorrence with which conscription has been regarded by these popes was directed rather against that form of it, which had been adopted by the great powers, than against universal service as it exists, for instance, in Switzerland.

The Catholic conscientious objector, as has been said, rests the main part of his case on the contention that the requisite conditions for a just war are lacking and his conflict with society derives from the fact that the presence or absence of these conditions is a question of which the State claims to be the sole judge. Of the jealousy of the State in this matter we have a curious instance in the Thirty-seventh of the Articles of the Church of England, of which the last paragraph in the Latin version is: *Christianis licet, ex mandato magistratus, arma portare, et justa bella administrare*. In the English version the word *justa* disappears and the paragraph reads: "It is lawful for Christian men, at the command of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars." The omission would seem to suggest that the authorities dreaded lest a private person should take on himself to say whether a war was just or unjust. Unjust wars, according to Bishop Burnet in his exposition of the Articles, are such as are designed "for making conquests, for the enlargement of empire and the raising of the glory of princes". "When it is visible that a war is unjust," he continues, "certainly no man of conscience can take part in it, unless it be in the defensive part." But no government could wage a war, or at least, wage it for long, if it was "visible" to the majority of the people that it was unjust. If a war is unjust; then, if it is to be successfully prosecuted, this circumstance must, as far as it can, be kept out of sight.

An individual, who desires to assess with some degree of accuracy the rights and wrongs of an issue out of which an armed conflict between two or more nations has arisen, requires both a knowledge of history and a knowledge of human nature, and according to the measure which he possesses of both, is his verdict likely to prove correct. He must understand the relations between the belligerent parties, not merely in the months and years preceding the outbreak of war, but sometimes over a period of several generations, perhaps centuries. He must have some knowledge of the character of the men who direct the policy of the belligerent powers and also of the artifices of propaganda. But a knowledge of human nature in this matter is more important than a knowledge of history. For it is notorious how often the judgements of historians, deficient in psychological insight, are egregiously at fault; whereas an adequate knowledge of human nature, even if unaccompanied by historical erudition, will be a valuable safeguard against the erroneous conclusions hastily reached by those who are without it.

Many well-intentioned persons must of course admit their inability to form by themselves any definite conclusion as to the justice of a particular war. They will prefer to be guided by the views taken by others, the editor of a newspaper, a political leader in whom they have confidence, or perhaps someone whom they believe to be an expert in international affairs. It is surprising how little men look for guidance to their religious leaders, who are applauded if they follow the trend of public opinion and reviled as traitors, if they do not. Not even the Sovereign Pontiff himself furnishes an exception to this rule. It is known that Benedict XV was astonished when he found himself unable to enlist the support of the higher clergy in his efforts for the promotion of peace. The moral theologian fares, from one point of view, at least, a little better. He is held to have a definite function to perform in war-time. Catholic patriots consider that it is his duty to provide a theological justification for whatever their country may do and expect him to deliver the goods. Very few persons will interest themselves in his teaching about the conditions required for a just war and we should not judge him too harshly if, when the war fever is at its height, he himself is a little timid at the prospect of pressing it to its logical issues. For all practical purposes a war is considered to be "just", when, not so obviously unjust, that no citizen, who is both intelligent and honest, could support it. For a war to be just in the absolute sense, it must be just in the sight of God, through rigorously fulfilling the necessary conditions. Whether wars, which are "just" in this latter sense, occur is disputed and it is interesting to cite in this connexion the statement of the Vatican Radio on 1 April, 1942, to the effect that there are no wars in which one side is absolutely in the right. The function of the moral theologian is not so much to lay down whether a particular war be just or unjust, as to call attention to the ethical considerations which have to be taken into account, if a valid judgement is to be reached. His office is analogous to that of the dogmatic theologian, when the relations between religion and science are under discussion. The theologian should not attempt to dictate to the man of science, but it is his province to indicate where theology has some bearing upon scientific questions. There is however this difference between the two cases that the majority of scientific problems can be discussed without reference to dogmatic theology; whereas only very few, if any, political problems lack a moral aspect. If the moral theologian, in addition to being such, possesses sufficient knowledge of history and of politics, his utterances with regard to the moral aspect of war will thereby assume an added interest. If he is not qualified to speak on the political aspects of a war, society may ask from him a frank and generous acknowledgement of his limitations. In no case is it

desirable that a theologian make use of his reputation, as such, to seek to impose political opinions on others. So jealous was Newman of the rights of the individual conscience, that he declared that, were he a soldier or a sailor, and the Pope forbade him to take part in a war, which he could not in conscience see to be unjust, he would not feel bound to obey; and Rome did not consider him on that score unworthy of the Cardinal's hat. It seems logical to deduce therefore that, if required by the Pope to take part in a war, which he believed in conscience to be unjust, he would not have considered himself under an obligation to do so.

The problem of conscientious objection to military service is, of its nature, not susceptible of a logical solution. No government, having embarked on a war, will admit that it has done so unjustly. Such a government may be overthrown and its successor make this admission; but it, itself, will never do this. In the eyes of a belligerent government the conscientious objector enjoys, therefore, no *locus standi*, unless it should, itself, confer one on him, and this, out of self-defence, it will only do, if it feels reasonably sure that the number of conscientious objectors will be too small to endanger the successful prosecution of the war. The objector for his part will declare "that no man can owe that to his prince to go and murder other persons at his command", and that it is this which he is being called upon to do. The State may kill the conscientious objector; it may imprison him, or inflict on him the milder penalties of banishment or loss of civil rights. The victim, for his part, may escape across the frontier, or hide, or forcibly resist the attempt to conscript him; or he may passively endure his fate. The most satisfactory solution is a compromise, by which the State accepts, and the objector renders, some form of alternative service to the community.

"An unjust peace is better than the justest war," cried Dean Colet from the pulpit of St. Paul's, as the dawn of the modern age was breaking. There is some exaggeration in these words, but less than many suppose. Yet they are never likely to echo the sentiments of those who hold in their hands the destinies of their fellow-men. So long as the world endures, there will be persons, called upon by the society of which they are members, to take courses which seem to them to be evil. We may feel sympathy for them; we may strive to mitigate their lot; but we cannot wholly eliminate the conditions which have been its source.

HUMPHREY J. T. JOHNSON.

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## POEMS BY HILARY FROOMBERG

## SONNET TO THE ELEMENTS ON ASH WEDNESDAY

THE quick eclectic rain will never care  
 For time or place or personality,  
 And soporific snow will sometimes dare  
 To sponsor death in his infinity.  
 But you, for whom the sun will always burn,  
 To atoms and to ashes must return.

A little nothingness of air betrays  
 The scattered sequence of a fall of leaves;  
 In you that same deficiency defrays  
 The debt which soon the dusted earth receives.  
 Because, although the sun will always burn,  
 To atoms and to ashes you return.

The Sun supreme will now and ever rule  
 And you must singe your wings or fly a fool.

## THE CROWD WAITING

The crowd waiting  
 like fish shoaling  
 in a silver security,  
 because in numbers  
 there is precaution,  
 because in numbers  
 there is power  
 and powerful protection.

The crowd waiting  
 like the larvae  
 curled in the chrysalis,  
 covered by convention  
 in a skin of safety.  
 Covered by convention  
 in the meek metal's mould.

The crowd waiting  
 as at harvesting  
 to heap the hoard  
 and fill the bare hands;  
 with grown-gold grain  
 to fill the bare hands  
 and pick out the chaff.

The crowd waiting,  
 at the door standing,  
 for we must enter  
 by the door only,  
 since no other way  
 but by the door only  
 leads to the kingdom.



## CAROL

When you grow into a boy  
 A piece of wood shall be your toy.  
     Lullay my little son,  
     Lullay my lovèd one.

When you grow into a man  
 A piece of wood your back shall span.  
     Lullay my little son,  
     Lullay my lovèd one.

When you lay within the womb  
 I little thought to be your tomb.  
     Lullay my little son,  
     Lullay my lovèd one.

When you lie within the grave  
 Ours shall be the life you gave.  
     Lullay my little son,  
     Lullay my lovèd one.

## PETER'S CHAINS

We, cradled in paternal care, as sons pray the Mass for Peter  
 and the candles' quiet embrace shines in a simple ecstasy of light,  
 sacrifice of the sun, pyre to the cinquefoil pain, lode to the lintel,  
 and fingers of flame in formation witness to contract, guide the out-  
 going introit.

Foam of light falls and flecks, fashions a file for the locked lids  
 and Longinus-thrust lances the lake; sudden water stung on the fire  
 at the shake of the silver-centred stigmata, the quick command to  
     break the bars  
 and let Peter, awake in sleep, be loosed by an angel at God's com-  
     mand

To go out past the guard to safety and saving, both for the Saviour,  
     to the Church and Rome.

O heave the shoulder to the sallying forth, soon aid is spent; only,  
     lonely,  
 seek out the incense, purely sing praise, rejoice in reunion, then  
     consider  
 the future farings, the wind of desire and water and based inviolable  
     rock.

## THE IRISH EMIGRANT AND AMERICAN NATIVISM

As Seen by British Visitors, 1836-1860

By MAX BERGER, PH.D.

*English travellers who visited the United States during the quarter-century preceding the Civil War were a motley lot. They included authors, journalists, lecturers, scientists, businessmen, clergymen, soldiers, politicians, artists, promoters, actors, song-writers, and sportsmen—to mention but a few. The total number of Englishmen who came to visit America during these years can never be estimated accurately, since no statistics of this type were kept by either the British or American governments. However, the number appears to have been quite large. Approximately two hundred and thirty of them published accounts of their travels. They came for many reasons and saw many things, their travel accounts naturally reflecting their special interests. But practically all of them made some mention of the Irish in America. The space devoted to the latter topic varied widely, ranging from a few lines to full chapters. See Max Berger, "The British Traveller in America, 1836-1860", for a complete annotated bibliography of these travellers, and for an analytical summary of their impressions of America.*

“ONE of the strongest of the national prejudices of the mass of the people in America, embracing all classes except the highest and most intelligent, is a dislike . . . of all foreigners.”\* This was the conclusion drawn in 1841 by J. S. Buckingham, lecturer, world-traveller, and former Whig cabinet minister.

Anti-foreign sentiment, far from dying out as time passed, appeared to be growing steadily as a force in American life and politics. Buckingham had been surprised to learn that this anti-foreign sentiment was directed chiefly against the English.† Mrs. Felton, another British visitor, was likewise amazed to discover that “generally speaking the Irish meet a much better reception than the English. So indeed, do all other foreigners.”‡ This anti-British sentiment remained strong well into the 'fifties throughout all parts of the country. At that time an Englishman who had spent some years in rural areas of the West reported that the Irishman was “unques-

\* J. S. Buckingham, *America*, I, p. 283.

‡ Mrs. Felton, *American Life*, p. 48.

† Ibid.

tionably liked, and certainly more respected and liked than an Englishman of the same class".\*

In the East, however, popular sentiment had shifted. Although the Englishman was still viewed with suspicion, the Irishman was now thoroughly disliked. Nativist prejudice had turned its chief animus against the latter. As early as 1836, Harriet Martineau had noted the clamour for shipping Irish emigrants back to Ireland. Other Britons had been told that the "plague of the Irish" was the worst plague of all.† Anti-Irish feeling increased steadily thereafter. T. C. Grattan, British Consul to Boston during 1839-1846, reported that "the Irish have to encounter considerable prejudices . . . in almost every section of the Union, though in different degrees".‡ The mere fact of being an Irishman was all but considered a crime by Americans, the consul affirmed. Irish nationality was "almost sufficient to warrant his conviction if arraigned before an American jury", reported still another visitor.§ The latter claimed to have seen Irishmen turned out of New York stores, the owners refusing to sell to them.||

The Famine Emigration, shortly thereafter, fanned this sentiment to a white heat. In 1849, when Major Thornton suggested to an American friend that the deportation of negroes might solve the slavery problem, the American, a Bostonian, retorted that the deportation of the Irish would be preferable.¶ The American attitude of the 'fifties was reflected in the story of the Irishman who had beaten his ten-year-old American-born son. "The boy was very indignant, and said it was not the beating he minded, but the being beaten by an Irishman."\*\*\* To be called an "Irishman" had come to be almost as great an insult as to be called a "nigger".††

What were the causes for so virulent a prejudice, the traveller wondered. A few visitors felt that it was the result of a carry-over of traditional national animosities on the part of the English stock. Grattan, for example, attributed the intensity of the anti-Irish sentiment in New England to the strong English traditions of that region. Most Englishmen, however, regarded American nativism as an indigenous product.

In respect to economic causation, the English traveller was convinced that except for the free negro the native had little to fear

\* Charles Casey, *Two Years on a Farm of Uncle Sam*, p. 222.

† Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, I, p. 435; Andrew Bell, *Men and Things in America*, p. 108.

‡ T. C. Grattan, *Civilized America*, II, p. 28.

§ Francis Wyse, *America: Realities and Resources*, III, p. 33.

|| *Ibid.*, III, p. 37.

¶ Major John Thornton, *Diary of a Tour through the United States and Canada*, p. 87.

\*\*\* Sir Edward Sullivan, *Rambles and Scrambles in North and South America*, p. 196.

†† Mrs. M. C. J. F. Houstoun, *Hesperos*, I, p. 179.

from Irish competition, since the Irish engaged in menial and ill-paid tasks that native labour spurned. Francis Wyse mentioned the "very general" fallacy that the huge emigration of 1845-1846 had caused an increase in prices.\* D. W. Mitchell, a former resident of the South, also ridiculed American claims that pauperism among the natives was a product of emigration.† Another Briton mentioned the fact that the Protestant Irish were very strict on maintaining the prevailing wage rates, and were regarded very highly in the community. But he failed to correlate the two factors.‡

Only Grattan and Sir Charles Lyell, the famous geologist, recognized the importance of economic competition in arousing hostility between native and Hibernian. Lyell went so far as to remark that although the Irish were disliked by American labour, they were regarded as essential by American capitalists. The latter spoke of the Irish "with kindness . . . saying they are most willing to work hard, keep their temperance vows . . . and are putting by large savings".§ Lyell's clarity of vision was not shared by most other Britons.

A widely credited cause for native prejudice, and one not entirely unfounded, was the contempt the Irish aroused solely because they were foreigners. Even Grattan, who was well disposed towards them, was compelled to admit that the Irishman's "uncouth air, his coarse raiment, his blunders, and his brogue are unattractive or ludicrous".|| The emigrants' abysmal poverty, the filth and squalor of the emigrant ships, towboats and railroad vans, the terrible condition of the slums they inhabited, all combined to present them in an unattractive light.

The financial burden of maintaining homes and hospitals for sick and destitute emigrants was a heavy one. In New York City \$817,336 was spent for this purpose in 1850 alone.¶ Although visitors felt that America was doing more than its share for the indigent emigrant, they realized that it was only natural for the nativists to look askance at such expenditures.

It was not unusual for Britons to agree with the nativists that many of the younger emigrants were "idle bums and hoodlums".\*\* Although the Irish had come to monopolize police work by 1840, it was charged that they had likewise begun to monopolize the jail

\* Wyse, op. cit., I, p. 62.

† D. W. Mitchell, *Ten Years in the United States*, p. 153.

‡ William Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake*, p. 50.

§ Sir Charles Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, p. 187; see also Grattan, op. cit., II, p. 12.

|| Grattan, op. cit., II, pp. 7-8.

¶ G. M. Stephenson, *History of American Immigration*, p. 99.

\*\*Mrs. I. L. Bishop, *An Englishwoman in America*, p. 384; J. S. Buckingham, *Eastern and Western States*, II, p. 18.

cells. In New York City 50 per cent of the prison inmates were alleged to be Irish.\* Considering the fact that this proportion dropped to 20 per cent in upstate Auburn, and to a still lower figure in Pennsylvania, where the Irish were proportionately fewer in number, the belief that the Irish constituted the backbone of the criminal element was scarcely justified. Yet nativists pointed to the fact that during 1848 Virginia had only one arrest per 23,000 persons while Massachusetts had one per 7586 persons. Ruffianism in the construction camps, election disorders, and riots with the nativists, all of which came to the attention of the foreign traveller, added to the derogatory opinion of the Irish.

Most travellers regarded it as almost a truism that the Irishman and drink were inseparable. Even those most favourably disposed towards the Irish accepted this. T. C. Grattan, an Irishman himself, went so far as to characterize intemperance as "the true source of every excess committed by Irishmen in America".† Although Grattan maintained that the American contractors who furnished the work gangs with whisky were the real culprits, other visitors, and the nativists, too, ignored this factor completely. Occasionally a visitor or two would have the temerity to deny Irish intemperance despite all the evidence to the contrary.‡ But these were the rare exceptions. English temperance advocates who attended meetings of the New York Council found them "marked by slang, ribaldry, and drunkenness". When they discovered that its members were chiefly "Irishmen of intemperate habits, who have been unable or unwilling to gain a livelihood in any honest calling",§ they were only too willing to agree with the nativists that the "drunken Irishman" was a menace to society. Knowledge that from one-half to one-third of New York's liquor trade was in the hands of the Irish, and the fact that even grocery stores dispensed liquor, confirmed this opinion.

Another factor recognized as contributing to nativist prejudice was the contempt aroused by the fact that the Irish worked at the lowest menial tasks, tasks which were deposed by native Americans. When the Irishman did the work of a negro, he sank to the negro's level. The result, said one traveller, was that "it would be difficult to say which are held in greater contempt".||

Irish clannishness was recognized as still another basic cause for nativist antipathy. E. L. Godkin, who later became editor of the

\* W. F. Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine*, p. 364.

† Grattan, op. cit., II, p. 29.

‡ A. M. Maxwell, *A Run through the United States*, II, p. 141; Reverend Jabez Burns, *Notes of a Tour in the United States and Canada*, p. 172.

§ R. Ogden, ed., *Life and Letters of E. L. Godkin*, I, p. 183.

|| Houstoun, op. cit., I, p. 293.

*Nation*, called it the paramount factor.\* America had not yet become accustomed to the sight of foreign "quarters" in her cities, and viewed their existence with suspicion and alarm. The tenacity with which the Irish retained such Old-World customs as the "wake" disturbed many Americans. In this respect the Irish were contrasted with the Scots and English, who were so readily assimilated.† Captain Frederick Marryat, famous author of sea stories, pointed to the distinct Irish quarters as proof that the Irish were "just as little pleased with the institutions of the United States as they are with the government at home".‡ Godkin, an Irish Protestant, on the other hand, blamed these quarters upon the priesthood, which, he alleged, refused to allow emigrant children to attend the common schools and thus assimilate American ways. He charged that the Church was "vehemently opposed to emigration to the West since they (the Irish) are more difficult for the Church to control when so scattered".§ A third, and more accurate, explanation of these foreign quarters was given by J. R. Godley, who did not permit his staunch Anglicanism to obscure his better judgement. The Irish lived together, said Godley, solely because they were regarded as a pariah class and no one else would live with them.||

Irish clannishness extended even to the formation of separate militia units. In 1846 it was noted that "there is scarcely a city of any note in the United States in which an Irish volunteer corps is not to be found, clothed in the national colour and ornamented with the harp, shamrock, and other national emblems".¶ Since this observer favoured rapid assimilation, he regarded such segregation as disgusting and dangerous. He pointed out that although the Irish were "marshalled at the tail-end of every military procession or movement in which they are permitted to take part; they seldom succeed in securing the respect of a single American".\*\* Friction between Irish and native militia units was not uncommon. During the Boston anti-Catholic riots of 1837, and the Philadelphia nativist riots of 1844, open clashes occurred.†† But the Irish units remained in existence. During President Taylor's funeral, an Englishwoman noted their presence in large numbers in the procession. "A cleaner, better dressed, more respectable-looking set of men I have seldom seen," she commented.‡‡

\* Ogden, op. cit., I, p. 183.

† Houstoun, op. cit., I, p. 293.

‡ Capt. Frederick Marryat, *A Dairy in America*, second series, II, p. 141.

§ Ogden, op. cit., I, p. 183.

|| J. R. Godley, *Letters from America*, II, p. 175.

¶ Wyse, op. cit., II, p. 110. Contemporary Irish-American sources bear this out, placing the total number of Irish militia companies in the United States as somewhere between twenty-five and thirty. New York had a full regiment. (See T. D. McGee, *History of the Irish Settlers in North America* (1855), pp. 191-192.)

\*\* Wyse, op. cit., II, p. 111.

†† J. T. Adams, *New England in the Republic*, p. 337.

‡‡ Marianne Finch, *Englishwoman's Experience in America*, p. 22.



Of all the factors enumerated by visitors as having stirred up American nativist sentiment, the one regarded as most influential was the role of the Irish emigrant in politics. Here, the Irish were universally regarded as a corrupting influence. Not even their staunchest friends attempted to deny this. Beginning with Harriet Martineau's charge in 1836 that an Irishman just landed had perjured himself and voted nine times, and continuing down to Charles Mackay's recital of the New York election contest of 1857, "when the whole male immigration, landed in the morning from a Cork or a Liverpool vessel . . . voted ere the afternoon for one ticket or the other", the tale was repeated with infinite variations by one traveller after another.\* Plural voting was, of course, comparatively simple, since registration laws were either lax or lacking.

Britons noted that Americans were especially indignant at the manner in which the naturalization laws were evaded—often through the connivance of officials affiliated with the dominant party machines.† Britons hostile to American democracy were happy to repeat the charge that "there were hundreds of foreigners (principally the labouring Irish) naturalized free of expense by the Jackson party, although they had only just arrived in the country".‡ The ruffianism of Irish hoodlums "who having obtained the franchise in many instances by making false affidavits, consider themselves at liberty to use the club also",§ did nothing to soothe native susceptibilities. "They are the leaders in all the political rows and commotions," declared Marryat, paraphrasing the nativists.|| Election riots resulting in property damage and bloodshed occurred frequently, particularly during the Know-Nothing campaigns.¶ These riots were so serious that occasionally it was necessary to call out the militia.\*\* Inasmuch as election corruption was regarded by English visitors as purely an urban phenomenon, and since the Irish were concentrated in cities, it was but natural that in the end all corruption was laid at their door.†† New York and Philadelphia had the unenviable reputation for being the worst localities in this respect. As late as 1860 the

\* Martineau, op. cit., I, p. 340; Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America*, I, p. 178.

† Buckingham, op. cit., I, p. 493; Alfred Bunn, *Old England and New England*, II, p. 6.

‡ Anonymous, *Uncle Sam's Peculiarities*, I, p. 229.

§ Bishop, op. cit., p. 384.

|| Marryat, op. cit., second series, II, p. 141.

¶ *Uncle Sam's Peculiarities*, I, p. 228; Bishop, op. cit., pp. 385-386; Robert Everest, *A Journey through the United States and Canada*, p. 149.

\*\* Buckingham, op. cit., I, pp. 492-494.

†† Alexander Mackay, *The Western World*, II, p. 26. Alexander Mackay was the Washington correspondent of the London *Morning Chronicle*. He was undoubtedly the most acute observer on the American political scene of all the Englishmen who visited this country during that period.

government of the former was reputed to be in the hands of politicians who constituted "the very scum of the Irish population".\* Although earlier friends of the Irish had blamed this corruption on either "faults in the system of registration" or "the cosmopolitan seaport population and universal suffrage",† travellers after 1840 refused to accept such apologies. Moreover, the fact that the Irish element almost always supported the ultra-democratic parties, such as the Loco-Focos of the late 'thirties, added nothing to their credit in English eyes.‡

The Irish vote was credited with great importance for a number of reasons. In the first place the Irish controlled or at the least enjoyed a considerable influence in the politics of several of the leading cities. This control was entirely disproportionate to their number. Britons viewed this influence with suspicion, contempt, and disgust. Sir Charles Lyell's remark that the pigs could not be banned from New York streets, since their Irish owners had votes and would not submit to it, typified this attitude.§ More important than control of any one city, however, was the fact that such control gave the Irish "the balance of power". This, it was alleged, had proved the decisive factor in many an election.|| For example, the emigrant vote was credited with having tipped the scales in favour of the Democrats as far west as Ohio.¶ Since both New York and Pennsylvania were important "doubtful" states, alleged control of these states by Irish politicians convinced many natives and visitors that ignorant emigrants actually ruled the country.\*\* One result of this, it seemed to the British, was that the Irish were wooed by all parties. In turn the Hibernian took advantage of this situation to extend his influence still further. J. F. W. Johnston, an English agricultural expert, visited a Catholic bazaar in Albany in 1850. He was amazed to find everyone in town patronizing it. Upon inquiry he learned that the Catholic vote was "so strong that nobody who looks for any public office, and no party, dare give them offence. Everyone courts them, and thus they continually gain in strength, wealth, and

\* William Hancock, *An Emigrant's Five Years in the Free States of America*, p. 57.

† Martineau, op. cit., I, p. 340; George Combe, *Notes on the United States of North America*, I, p. 223.

‡ Wyse, op. cit., III, pp. 51-52; *Uncle Sam's Peculiarities*, I, p. 229; J. G. Taylor, *The United States and Cuba*, p. 29; Godley, op. cit., II, pp. 176-177; Houston, op. cit., I, p. 179.

§ Lyell, op. cit., I, pp. 249-250.

|| Bunn, op. cit., II, p. 9; H. S. Tremenheere, *Notes on Public Subjects during a Tour of the United States and Canada*, p. 124; Houston, op. cit., I, p. 179; W. E. Baxter, *American and the Americans*, p. 154; D. W. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 149.

¶ Sir Charles Lyell, *Travels in North America*, II, p. 79.

\*\* Bunn, op. cit., II, p. 9; Marryat, op. cit., second series, II, p. 142; Mitchell, op. cit., p. 149.

influence."\* It was for this reason that some Englishmen attributed all the anti-British utterances of American public figures to the fact that the latter had to "throw the bunkum" in order to secure the Irish vote.†

Wherein lay the secret of Irish success in politics? Some reasons were more or less obvious to even the most casual foreign observer. Among these were the Irishmen's corruptibility, their violence at elections, which intimidated the opposition, and their clannishness. Amenability to control through petty patronage, such as pre-election employment on municipal "pipe-laying" projects in New York, or "reed-cutting" jobs in Savannah, was also noted.‡ Yet none of these appeared to constitute a sufficiently satisfactory explanation. In the end the British visitor concluded that the only satisfactory explanation was to be found in their organization—an organization, they alleged, which was directed and controlled by the priesthood. "On account of their unanimous subordination to their leaders", the Irish vote was strongest and best organized in New York, where "Archbishop Hughes could rely on them to a man".§ Hence, he had a "greater disposable force at his command than any political leader in the Union".|| The ability of the Catholic hierarchy to control the electorate was reiterated time and time again—but never proven. Thus, while Sir Charles Lyell affirmed that the Cincinnati priesthood had instructed emigrants to vote for Polk, his evidence was based upon hearsay.¶ Of the latter there was plenty. Baxter, a businessman, for example, stated that "in all parts of the country I heard complaints . . . of priests exercising an unconstitutional power over ignorant voters".\*\*

The increase in Catholic dioceses from thirteen to thirty-nine between 1837 and 1849, and the corresponding growth of churches from 300 to 1024, chiefly in the large cities and in the Midwest, aroused trepidation and suspicion among British visitors as well as among native Americans.†† Both groups were preponderantly Protestant. When a man as worldly as Buckingham became worried by the proselytizing activity of the Catholics, its importance in arousing Protestant opposition cannot be overlooked.‡‡

\* J. F. W. Johnston, *Notes on North America*, II, p. 236; see also Bunn, op. cit., II, p. 9; Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 149-150; Buckingham, op. cit., II, p. 17; I, p. 567; Wyse, op. cit., I, p. 61.

† Mitchell, op. cit., p. 280; Charles Mackay, op. cit., I, pp. 176, 181; James Roberston, *A Few Months in America*, p. 20.

‡ Tremenhare, op. cit., p. 124; Sir Charles Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, II, p. 6.

§ Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 151, 275.

|| Godley, op. cit., II, p. 176.

¶ Lyell, op. cit., II, p. 291.

\*\* Baxter, op. cit., p. 155; see also Charles Mackay, op. cit., I, p. 178; Bunn, op. cit., II, p. 9.

†† Johnston, op. cit., II, p. 410; Marryat, op. cit., second series, III, p. 163.

‡‡ J. S. Buckingham, *America*, III, p. 349.

There is also a hint that the prolific birth-rate of the dread Romanists was another cause for anxiety on the part of the native population.\* However, Britons were almost unanimous in declaring that the second generation of emigrants was rapidly becoming assimilated. The most important factor towards this end was declared to be the common school.† Evidently the Church recognized this, for according to British observers it did its utmost to maintain its own schools.‡ Its success in temporarily securing a share of the New York public funds in 1840 for parochial schools dismayed Godley and many another staunch Anglican. Godley felt that it was the beginning of the end of the separation of Church and State, a separation which he admired in America but deprecated in England.§ The complaint of the English visitor who declared that "every Irish street urchin attended a Catholic school" was cited as proof of the Church's hold on a large part of the emigrant population.|| Godkin, an Orangeman, despaired of any real assimilation until the flow of emigration could be lessened or stopped.¶ Other travellers, however, took a more optimistic view. They were gratified at the tendency of the younger generation to be farther from the Church than their parents had been. They were particularly delighted to note an increasing number of desertions from Catholicism.\*\* Occasionally, however, wishful thinking outran the facts. The report that of the second generation "scarcely any adhere to the religion of their fathers", was obviously untrue.††

In any event a large number of Americans were ready to believe the worst concerning the emigrant. The result was the nativist movement. In 1835 the Native American Party was formed. It elected a representative to Congress, and in the following year ran a candidate for the mayoralty. The party soon spread to Pennsylvania, and from thence southward, holding a state convention in Louisiana in 1841. The anti-Catholic riots in Philadelphia (1844) were laid at its door. In 1845 it claimed a membership of 48,000 in New York, 14,000 in Massachusetts, and a mere 6000 in the other states.‡‡ Obviously, it recruited its greatest strength in the two states that already had the largest Irish population.

The Native American Party lost ground after this extremely rapidly and soon disappeared as a distinct political organization.

\* Bunn, op. cit., I, p. 23.

† Charles Mackay, op. cit., I, p. 182; Baxter, op. cit., p. 156; William Chambers, *Things As They are In America*, 350; Johnston, op. cit., II, p. 409.

‡ Reverend George Lewis, *Impressions of America and American Churches*, p. 253.

§ Godley, op. cit., II, p. 32.

|| John Macgregor, *Our Brothers and Cousins*, p. 59.

¶ Ogden, op. cit., I, p. 184.

\*\* Godley, op. cit., II, p. 172; Reverend Henry Caswall, *Western World Revisited*, p. 157.

†† Robertson, op. cit., p. 157.

‡‡ H. P. Fairchild, *Immigration*, p. 69.

Nativism, however, remained as virulent as ever, and in fact grew stronger. Soon it was manifesting itself under a new banner, the Know-Nothings. Beginning as a secret organization in New York in 1850, the Know-Nothings spread like wildfire. It was essentially a general anti-emigrant movement, rather than one directed against a particular nationality. Thus, while anti-Irish in New York, it was chiefly anti-German in Maryland, where the German population more than twice outnumbered the Irish.\* Its platform called for the stoppage of immigration, the restriction of public office to the native-born, and a check upon the spread of "Romanism".

By 1854 the party had become so powerful that it polled 122,282 votes in New York State, electing forty members to the State Legislature. In Massachusetts the Know-Nothing candidate won the governorship. Almost every legislator professed a sympathy with its tenets. Know-Nothing candidates to Congress were also successful. The movement reached its height in 1855. In that year Know-Nothing candidates were elected to governorships in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Kentucky; it controlled legislatures in eight states, and had powerful minorities in four others. This, however, was the crest of the wave. The party's defeat in Virginia damaged its prestige, and a split in party ranks on the slavery issue brought about its collapse. The poor showing made by its presidential candidate in 1856, ex-President Fillmore, relegated the Know-Nothings into oblivion.† Although they made a strong impression on contemporaries, the Know-Nothings had little real influence on legislation.

What new light can a study of the reports of British visitors throw upon the movement? The intricacies and details of party organization, election statistics, and legislative manoeuvring did not interest the traveller. But the causes and demands of the nativist movement did interest him profoundly. Grattan traced the origin of nativism back to the Founding Fathers, quoting Madison to the effect that "foreign influence is a Grecian Horse to the Republic. We cannot be too careful to exclude its entrance."‡ Francis Wyse, who, like Grattan, had spent many years in America, discussed the formation of the Native American Party. He pointed out that its avowed purpose was to check emigration and to deprive specific nationalities, principally the Irish, of the basic rights of American citizenship. Wyse noted that

\* L. F. Schmeckebeier, *History of the Know-Nothing Party in Maryland*, pp. 46-47; L. D. Scisco, *Political Nativism in New York State*, p. 17.

† G. M. Stephenson, *History of American Immigration*, pp. 112-114.

‡ Grattan, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22.

the power of the nativists was concentrated along the seaboard, where there was no shortage of labour. He added that the Native American Party had been most successful in New York, a city which was "at all times remarkable in its antipathies and ill-concealed dislike to the emigrant stranger".\* If one is surprised at the strength of the nativist movement in this stronghold of the Irish, it should be recalled that although the latter were often accused of wielding decisive political power, and of using it for their own ends, yet paradoxically the very states in which they were strongest were precisely the ones which first attempted to restrict emigration.

Observers hostile to America did not hesitate to exaggerate nativist tendencies in order to create an adverse reaction in Europe. D. W. Mitchell, for example, who wanted to further anti-Union sentiments in England during the Civil War, went so far as to state categorically that if let alone the native-born population in the northern states would "at once stop immigration from Europe".†

The controversy concerning the grant of state aid to the New York parochial schools drew the attention of British visitors to the Native American Party, which was the focus of opposition to the grant. This party received further notoriety as a result of the nativist riots in Philadelphia in 1844. Wyse, a Catholic, claimed that many persons had been killed, and over a hundred buildings burned, including churches, convents, and schools.‡ Lyell, on the other hand, who was sympathetic to the nativists, glossed over the damage done, implying that it was no greater than the Irish deserved.§ Considering the excitement aroused by the incident throughout the Union, its treatment by the traveller is disappointing. Biased opinion we have, but little in the way of serious attempts to get at the fundamental implications of the riots.

W. E. Baxter and Charles Mackay, both ardent anti-Catholics, justified the Know-Nothing movement on the ground that it was an understandable reaction to the ecclesiastical power that controlled the Irish vote.|| Voting frauds, clannishness, election violence, all played their part in promoting the movement, the two Britons stated, but the religious factor in their opinion was paramount. Most Englishmen agreed with them as to the causes of the movement, whose purpose, in the eyes of these observers, was to eliminate the threat of control by Rome. This would be accomplished by preventing any but "native-born Americans from

\* Wyse, *op. cit.*, I, p. 45.

† Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

‡ Wyse, *op. cit.*, I, p. 58.

§ Lyell, *op. cit.*, I, p. 257.

|| Baxter, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Charles Mackay, *op. cit.*, I, p. 178.



voting".\* Later, emigration would be stopped and naturalization restricted.

It was this anti-emigration policy that aroused the wrath of Grattan, who favoured maintaining America as a haven for the poor and oppressed of Europe, and who in any case was sympathetic to the Irish since he was Irish himself. Others also opposed the Know-Nothings. James Stirling, who had witnessed the anti-foreign terrorism incident upon the Know-Nothings' control of New Orleans, called for the formation of a vigilante committee of "angry and energetic foreigners". Such a committee, he was sure, would speedily put an end to the disorders. Being himself opposed to democracy, Stirling quite naturally characterized nativism as a "pestilent symptom of the gangrene of ultra-Democracy".† Another visitor more favourable to democracy pointed out, however, that nativism by its very nature was incompatible with the democratic principle.‡ D. W. Mitchell, a man of southern sympathies who was interested chiefly in discrediting the North during the Civil War, affirmed that the Know-Nothing leader, Ned Buntline, had been whipped on Broadway by a prostitute. Inasmuch as Buntline was notorious for his anti-British utterances, Mitchell regarded this action as eminently just. Yet the very next moment he prayed that the Know-Nothings might succeed in wiping out the Irish in America.§

It was this anti-Irish attitude that won the Know-Nothing movement its support among certain English visitors. One woman, after witnessing the election disorders of 1854, became so rabidly anti-Irish that she called the Know-Nothings the party of true Americanism.|| On the whole, visitors took these election incidents far more seriously than did Americans. Said one Briton concerning such an altercation, "civil war was declared between the Irish and the lower classes of native citizens".¶ Attempts made to fire Catholic churches were prevented only by the presence of Irish guards. In Philadelphia, this traveller stated, a house had been destroyed and many lives had been lost in a fight of this kind.\*\* Willingness to believe such tales, seldom witnessed by the author, was influenced not only by the Briton's traditional hostility towards the Irish, but also by such specific travel incidents as seeing an Irishman flaunting a sign reading, "We will NOT be governed by Americans."†† Mrs. Bishop, then a sickly girl of twenty-three,

\* Charles Mackay, *op. cit.*, I, p. 179.

† James Stirling, *Letters from the Slave States*, pp. 141-144.

‡ H. A. Murray, *Lands of the Slave and the Free*, II, pp. 388-389.

§ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 269, 283.

¶ *Uncle Sam's Peculiarities*, II, p. 190.

†† Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

|| Bishop, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-420.

\*\* *Ibid.*, I, p. 228.

claimed that New York newspapers had variously set the number of election day (1854) casualties at from 45 to 700 persons killed or wounded. Irishmen firing on a Know-Nothing assemblage had precipitated three days of fighting, which necessitated calling out the militia. She herself had seen two dead bodies on the blood-covered walks and roadways of the Five Points slum. Yet, she reported incredulously, business went on as usual. Her American acquaintances passed off the matter with the remark that it was "only an election riot".\*

The British traveller's views on nativism, therefore, were the end-product of a conflict of prejudices. On the one hand he tended to endorse its anti-Irish stand; on the other he had a natural aversion to it since he was a foreigner himself. Nor did it take too much reflection on his part to realize that the nativist movement was not only anti-Irish and anti-German, but also anti-British. In the end, therefore, much as he might sympathize with its anti-Irish position, the British visitor remained highly critical of American nativism.

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## SOME RECENT BOOKS

### SUB SPECIE AETERNITATIS

*A Woman of the Pharisees.* By François Mauriac. (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 9s.)

*Come Home Traveller.* By Claude Kinnoull. (John Miles. 10s. 6d.)

[Reviewed by BARBARA WALL.]

UNTIL now only one or two of François Mauriac's books have appeared in English—a novel, *Viper's Tangle* (*Noeud de Vipères*), and an essay on the problem of the Catholic novelist, *God and Mammon* (*Dieu et Mammon*). Eyre and Spottiswoode are going to publish a collected edition of his novels, translated by a most distinguished translator, Gerard Hopkins, of which *A Woman of the Pharisees* (*La Pharisiennne*) is the first to appear.

It seems that most great writers have their eternal types that recur in their novels—Tolstoy with his Pierre and Levin strain, Dostoevsky with his recurrent Alyoshas and Muishkins, down to Huxley's unvarying symbols and Graham Greene's constant, the hunted man. Mauriac is no exception. In most of his novels, set as they are in small provincial towns or villages, we find a humble

\* Bishop, op. cit., p. 386.

unwanted parish priest, an overbearing social-working woman, and someone deeply involved in some sort of sexual sin. Mauriac is fascinated by what most people find boring. A suburban road of dull, identical houses fires his imagination as inevitably as it would paralyse the imagination of most of us. He immediately wants to know what is happening behind the shutters and closed doors. His one play was called *Asmodée* after the little demon who lifts off the roofs of houses and peers in to see what passions are at work, what jealousies, animosities, frustrations; what holiness.

Brigitte Pian, the woman of the Pharisees, the pharisaical woman, lives in Bordeaux with her two stepchildren. Her husband prefers to remain on their country *propriété* near to which lies the village, Baluzac, where the action of this novel largely takes place. In Baluzac there lives a simple and holy priest who, apart from his parochial duties, undertakes to coach and care for "difficult" boys. Jean de Mirbel is sent to him one vacation. Jean is "difficult" for obvious reasons. He has no family life. His mother, whom he adores, is engaged in love affairs and he is looked after by a cruel uncle. He knows affection for the first time while living with the *curé*, for the *curé* loves him, and also Brigitte Pian's fifteen-year-old step-daughter, Michèle, loves him. But he is deprived of Michèle through the intervention of Brigitte Pian and thus finally runs away with the chemist's atheist wife. In forbidding Michèle access to Jean, Brigitte Pian thinks, or thinks she thinks, she is acting for the best. She always thinks she is acting for the best, and thinks her actions are inspired by her religion, indeed they are inspired by her religion. But in point of fact she is always acting for the worst for she is incapable of loving. She gives with one hand and kills with the other. She is generous, as her religion would have her be, and always doing good works and giving uplifting advice, but because she knows nothing of love she is bitterly destructive. It is not until all her victims have either died or deserted her, leaving her a lonely and detested woman, that she comes to understand the error of her ways, and through love of one person she finally arrives at the ability to love which then spreads to God and her neighbour. The final words of the book are: "She understood at last that it is not our deserts that matter but our love."

Mauriac is a great novelist, a master-observer of his fellowmen (and of himself), a master-analyst of their inmost characters; but at the same time he is a deeply religious writer. If one can presume to guess at someone else's process of thought, one might suggest that the problem: "Why did not the Redemption close the gates of hell for ever?" was somewhere at the back of Mauriac's mind at the outset of this novel. At the heart of this problem lies the question of love. For even if Our Lord shouldered the burden of our sins and closed the gates of hell for ever as far as they are concerned, there remains the fact of lovelessness and its consequences. To Mauriac love is the beginning and end of everything. Virtue without love becomes more meaningless than vice with love. It is not our merits—or, presumably, our demerits—that matter, but our love.

It is impossible to convey the quality or the atmosphere of a Mauriac novel in one's ordinary English idiom. Perhaps the two words that Mauriac uses most often are "abyss" and "destiny"—neither of them everyday words with us. He never refers to a human "life", but always to a human "destiny", and how pregnant with significance that is. "Life" is so casual and chancy compared with "destiny". With Mauriac, God's hand is always there—it is leading us even on to this bus rather than that. God does not, as it were, just wind us up, face us in the right direction, and then let us jog along by ourselves. His loving hand is steering us all the time. We have not got one life, but one *destiny*. And everything that happens is seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, which does not make its proportions less, but suddenly enormous.

Mauriac puts the most elusive shortcoming (and the hypocrisy of the Pharisee is the most elusive, for it is intrinsic to it that the hypocrite should be oblivious of his hypocrisy) under a microscope and sees it as a thing that re-echoes throughout the spheres. Indeed, if he had written Claude Kinnoull's book, full of blatant crimes, *Come Home Traveller* would have run into volumes.

As it is, *Come Home Traveller* is a concise, refreshing novel, of a kind rare in this country. A review I saw of it described it as "about as depressing as a coffin-lid". I did not find this, but on the contrary derived much joy from it because of the excellence of the writing, the oddity of the characterization, the lack of sentiment, the rightness of the ideology behind it. The central character is Louise, a beautiful happily-married young woman (all the characters are French) who, when she finds she is with child, feels deep revulsion (unexplainedly), and is sure that her marriage will be spoiled. This initial wrong-headedness puts Louise on a wrong road for the rest of her brief life. She tries to dispose of her child, going, among other things, to a witch-doctor in French Equatorial Africa where she and her husband live. She fails, but as a result of her efforts the child is born an imbecile and physically a monster. The birth occurs in France. She dares not let her husband know what the child is like and, anyway, feeling that their close unity is at an end, she sends him a telegram—as if from a mutual friend—to the effect that neither she nor the child survived the birth. She then places the baby on a convent doorstep. The next day, however, she returns to reclaim the child and henceforward devotes herself to looking after it and earning her living to this end until she dies of consumption in her thirties. But this is not depressing because the writer is not depressed. Though charged with the tragic sense of life, she is an optimist, and we feel throughout that there is still sunshine on the wall.

Side by side with Louise's drama we have the drama of the mutual friend, Suzanne, who looks after her family's house and farm at Cogolou; Suzanne's brother, Gérard, and the man who loves her, Philippe—both excellently-drawn young monarchists. We follow the network of these lives, and the life of France, during the years between the two wars. Suzanne's age-old, rooted life on

the family farm overlaps—through her desire to “write”—with the deracinate cosmopolitan riviera set, and this provides material for some admirable vignettes, as competently and knowledgeably done as the intensely religious, intensely superstitious, intensely traditional Spanish maid of Suzanne, Dolores.

I said that Louise was the central character of the book, but she is not. Dolores is the central character, for Dolores represents Europe, old Europe, the religion of Europe, and is in this way the pivot of the book. Towards the end she tells Suzanne that she must pack her trunk and go home. Suzanne repeats the conversation to Gérard.

“‘Do you think she meant Spain?’ Gérard asked.

“‘Not specifically. I believe she means the West, in the almost mystical way the gypsies think of it, as though it were a place. Maybe her home is only another symbol . . .’”

And then, when Dolores is on her way: “In travelling it was not the conveyance or the names of places that mattered, but the direction, only the direction.”

### SPANISH SPIRITUALITY

*Mother of Carmel.* A Portrait of St. Teresa of Jesus. By E. Allison Peers. (S.C.M. Press. 8s. 6d.)

*St. John of the Cross* and other Lectures and Addresses 1920-1945. By E. Allison Peers. (Faber and Faber. 15s.)

[Reviewed by MARY O'LEARY]

THE value of these two books, the first popular in character, the second scholarly but over-compressed, is to introduce the English-speaking public to the mind and heart, the love and energy and the depths of endurance to be found in the Spanish character.

In the first named book, *Mother of Carmel*, the friends of St. Teresa will find little new, but will be happy in the vivid, sympathetic portrait of that great genius who has of late suffered somewhat at the hands of English biographers. Two observations, however, occur to the reviewer, the one on a matter of scholarship and the other on a psychological aspect. One would like a little more elucidation concerning the MS. of the *Conceptions of the Love of God* which is not mentioned in Fray Luis de León's edition of the Saint's works\* and which we are told was published by Gracian in 1611. An interesting history surrounds that work, so that, even in so short a book, more informaton could be given to substantiate assertions made in its regard. The second observation concerns the fact that in this biography of St. Teresa, as in every other known to the reviewer, while a few of the Saint's confessors, one or two laymen or Bishops stand out as living personalities, the Carmelite

\* See copy in British Museum.

nuns themselves, the people with whom St. Teresa lived and worked and for whom she spent the riches of her spirit, remain shadowy figures, crowded into the background, made even, at times, to look slightly ridiculous (see p. 148). Even Anne of St. Bartholomew, who afterwards with incredible labours was to carry the reform into France and Belgium, has nothing to say for herself save to relate a few homely details of the *Mother* while Anne of Jesus, the saintly friend of John of the Cross, receives no more than a passing mention.

In the second book, Professor Peers changes his method of presentation. No longer is the spotlight focussed upon a single individual so that she epitomizes the intense individualism, the flaming soul of Spain; rather is the reader blinded by the rays which emanate from so many scintillating personalities that it becomes difficult to distinguish the different sources of light from which they come. Here is Spain dynamic, compressed into the life-history, the ideas and passionate loves of such different persons as John, the Saint of the Reformed Carmel; Ramon Lull and Josep de Montserrat, mystics of very different outlook; Columbus, the Discoverer, Lope de Vega, the dramatist; Vives, the Renaissance Humanist; Aribau and Cabanyes, poets of the Catalan revival, Rubio and other leading spirits of the *Jocs Florals*.

It is, perhaps, in his treatment of those writers who mark the transition from the Catalan revival to the poets of the early twentieth century, that Professor Peers gives us the most characteristic insight into the soul of Spain. We English people judge the Spaniard superficially enough in terms of the Basque and the Castilian, but of that other Spain whose roots lie deep in Mediterranean or Moorish lands we are too often profoundly ignorant. Exquisite fragments of verse are scattered in these later chapters of the book, of some of which Professor Peers gives us a thoughtful translation. But who could catch the rhythm of Maragall's *Les Roses Franques* (p. 145) ?

He vist unes roses—d'un vermell pujat,  
d'un vermell negrós—d'un vermell morat!  
Penjaven gronxant-se—del mur d'un jardí;  
ningú les pot heure—no es poden collir;  
són les roses lliures—de la servitud,  
són les roses franques, no paguen tribut.

Roses of freedom, for their loveliness  
Paying no tribute to our base desire . . .

are two fine lines, but they do not catch the haunting lilt of the original.

The thought in this book of *University Addresses* is so packed that nothing more can be done here save touch upon certain points of interest. The reader must master the whole book for himself and then delve deeper into its many sources if he would really grasp the *ethos* of the Spanish mind. The study of Luis Vives, while owing much to the too-little known work of the late Foster Watson,



presents a thought-provoking picture of the Humanist, friend of Erasmus and More, poised, cultured, but somehow wanting a little of the intensity of his less balanced compatriots. The little-known Josep de Montserrat speaks to us of the "Spiritual Exercises" laid down for that Monastery by the Abbot García de Cisneros, years before St. Ignatius published his own more famous version. On page 162 there is an interesting discussion of Spanish stoicism "so closely connected with idealism", and "one of the most deeply rooted elements in the Spanish character".

As is inevitable in a book which begins with St. John of the Cross and passes on through two other mystics to the erotic poetry and nature-mysticism of the Catalan revival, the book abounds in different presentments of love-themes. Readers of Fr. Martin D'Arcy's latest work\* would find here a galaxy of examples to illustrate the convergence and divergence of spiritual and merely natural love. One misses, perhaps, in Professor Peers' packed pages, the philosophical background which would have given his studies foundation, coherence, and a truly Spanish quality. He had his opportunity when treating of Raymund Lull, but he passed it by. Instead he gives us these enchanting words from that great writer:

"The Lover was all alone in the shade of a fair tree. Men passed by that place and asked him why he was alone. And the Lover answered: 'I am alone now that I have seen you and heard you, until now I was in the company of my Beloved!'" (p. 61).

If you understand those lines you understand the opening lecture on St. John of the Cross, and you have gone far on the way to understand the soul of Spain.

### THROUGH DOUBT'S LABYRINTHS

*The God of Love.* By J. K. Heydon. (Sheed & Ward. 8s. 6d.)

[Reviewed by R. P. PHILLIPS, D.D.]

SEVERAL interesting problems with regard to the treatment of apologetics are suggested by a book by J. K. Heydon called *The God of Love*. It is not, as might be supposed from the title, a description of the love of God as shown in the Redemption, but a reasoned argument in favour of the probability of a revelation.

Is the author right in conducting this argument, as he does, on the basis of his own certainty and knowledge of the faith? Ought he not rather to put himself on the level of his opponent, and argue simply on rational grounds, following that argument wherever it leads? If we assume the conclusion we set out to prove, how can our process be called in any sense scientific; and still worse how can it possibly convince the unbeliever since we start from different premisses?

The problem is not unlike that presented by epistemology in which the ontological value of the first principles of reason is

\* *The Mind and Heart of Love* (Faber and Faber).

investigated. It would be absurd to argue that they are valid for extramental reality on the supposition that they hold good for that reality. This would obviously be a vicious circle; while if we assume the opposite we have already shut ourselves up within our own minds, and excluded any possibility of making contact with any reality outside them.

The procedure of the metaphysician affords us a clue to the right method in Apologetics. He neither affirms nor denies the ontological value of the first principles, but examines the consequences of rejecting their application to reality, and sees to what difficulties and absurdities it leads.

The apologist has to examine and defend the first principles of the faith in a way similar to that which the metaphysician applies to the principles of the reason; but the very fact that he is an apologist shows that he is already certain of the truths of faith otherwise he would not set out to defend them. It is historically interesting to read the reasons and inducements which have brought a man from unbelief to faith, and such an account often has great apologetic value: but it is not itself Apologetics; for it does not defend the faith, it only searches for it and eventually finds it.

The apologist, who defends the faith, must of necessity first believe it himself: and so take this belief as the ground of his argument. He would be a hypocrite, and have little chance of convincing an opponent, if he were to pretend that he did not believe in order to appear impartial. His treatment of the defence of faith is none the less rational since he uses the principles and methods of reason to establish the credibility of the revelation, and the strength of the motives for believing it.

Mr. Heydon is right, then, in taking the faith as his ground, and also in being quite open and frank about it.

The question remains as to the best method of establishing the credibility of the revelation. Is it best done by a refutation of the ideas of unbelievers, or by a positive exposition of the reasons for accepting the revelation? Evidently these procedures are not mutually exclusive but can be used in conjunction, as was done by G. K. Chesterton in *The Everlasting Man*. To a certain extent Mr. Heydon follows his example; but the weakness of his treatment seems to be that it is too aprioristic, since he devotes the greater part of his book to expounding what he thinks ought to be, rather than to an examination of the positive claims of the Christian revelation to be accepted as true. The impression left on the mind is at best that the Christian religion may be true, but not that there is strong probability that this particular religion is indeed true.

It is to be hoped, however, that this very well-intentioned book may be a help to some who are dismayed by the confusion of a world that has abandoned the faith, and give them the guide which will lead them from the labyrinth of doubt.

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